DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 180 158 EC 122 194

AUTHOR Carr, Andrea
TITLE Reported Child Maltreatment in Florida: The Operation of Public Child Protective Service Systems.
INSTITUTION Rhode Island Univ., Kingston.
SPONS AGENCY National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect (DHEW/OHD), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE Aug 78
GRANT 90-C425
NOTE 219p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC09 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Age; Case Records; *Child Abuse; Exceptional Child Research; *Family Relationship; *Identification; *Neglected Children; *Program Evaluation; Sex (Characteristics); Social Agencies; Social Influences; *State Programs
IDENTIFIERS *Florida

ABSTRACT

The report examines the operation of Florida's child protective service system based on analysis of 2,889 representative cases of child abuse or neglect received by the State of Florida Child Abuse Registry from 1970 thru midsummer of 1977. Associations were investigated between antecedent variables (child's sex, race and age, and family structure characteristics) and results of the maltreatment event (the social worker's finding of the validity of the case, the case plan or disposition, and recidivism). Nine major findings were uncovered, including that the child's race and sex appeared for the most part to be unrelated to the maltreatment event and to the results of it; age, family size, and presence or absence of parents are related to the maltreatment event and the results of that event; the type of maltreatment found was strongly related to validity and disposition of the maltreatment event; recidivism of reported maltreatment was unrelated to background characteristics except family size and the initial incident of maltreatment; and the state's media campaign and reorganization of the central registry appeared to affect the operation of child protective services. (CL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

ED180158

REPORTED CHILD MALTREATMENT IN FLORIDA:

THE OPERATION OF PUBLIC CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICE SYSTEMS

ANDRÉA CARR

UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

AUGUST, 1978

A REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE ADMINISTRATION ON CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES, NATIONAL CENTER ON CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE.
RESEARCH SUPPORTED BY GRANT NUMBER 90-C425.

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: RICHARD J. GELLES

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Andrea Carr

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

EC 122194

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
BACKGROUND	4
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	10
Definitions	10
Hypotheses	11
METHODS AND PROCEDURES	14
Sampling Procedures	14
Coding	16
Reliability	19
Validity	32
Advantages	32
Limitations	33
SAMPLE DISTRIBUTIONS	35
Background Characteristics	35
Types of Maltreatment--Alleged and Found	39
Persons Alleged and Found to Maltreat Children	43
The Reporter of Alleged Maltreatment	45
Protective Services Response to Alleged Maltreatment	46
BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS AFFECTING REPORTED MALTREATMENT CASES	52
The Effects of Sex and Race on Reported Maltreatment	52
The Effect of Family Structure on Reported Maltreatment	57
The Effect of Age of the Child on Reported Maltreatment	65
Summary	69
FACTORS AFFECTING THE VALIDITY OF AN ALLEGED MALTREATMENT CASE	71
The Effects of Background Factors on Case Validity	71

Page

The Effect of Type of Maltreatment on Case Validity 76

The Effect of the Reporter on Case Validity 80

The Effect of the Relationship of the Abuser to the Abused on Case Validity 82

FACTORS AFFECTING THE DISPOSITION OF AN ALLEGED MALTREATMENT CASE . 84

The Effects of Background Factors on Case Disposition 85

The Effect of the Reporter on Case Disposition 91

The Effect of the Type of Maltreatment on Case Disposition . . . 94

RECIDIVISM OF REPORTED MALTREATMENT CASES 98

The Effect of Background Factors on Recidivism 99

The Effect of the Reporter on Recidivism 106

The Effect of the Relationship of the Abuser to the Abused on Recidivism 109

The Effect of the Type of Maltreatment on Recidivism 110

The Effect of Case Disposition on Recidivism 114

TRENDS IN THE ABUSE REGISTRY OPERATION 117

Changes in Background Factors 119

Changes in the Percent of Valid Cases and Changes in WATS Line Usage 122

Changes in the Reporter of Maltreatment and the Abuser 125

Changes in the Type of Maltreatment--Alleged and Found 128

Changes in Case Disposition 130

Length of Time in the System 132

Time to Respond to Allegations of Maltreatment 134

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS 138

REFERENCES 145

APPENDIX A. Sampling Procedures 150

APPENDIX B. Florida Coding Instructions 155

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		PAGE
1.	Missing Data	18
2.	Coding Reliability: A Comparison of Three Subsamples	21
3.	Frequenceis of Key Variables for Three Subsamples	23-29
4.	A Comparison of Sample Data and Florida Tally Sheet Data Sex and Race	36
5.	A Comparison of Sample Data and Florida Tally Sheet Data: Age, Number of Children and Parental Presence	38
6.	A Comparison of Sample Data and Florida Tally Sheet Data: Alleged and Found Child Maltreatment	40
7.	Projections to Florida's Population and the U.S. Population	42
8.	A Comparison of Sample Data and Florida Tally Sheet Data: Alleged and Found Abuser and Reporter of Maltreatment	44
9.	A Comparison of Sample Data and Florida Tally Sheet Data: Validity and Disposition	47
10.	Background Effects on the Circumstances of Maltreatment: Sex and Race	53-54
11.	Background Effects on the Circumstances of Maltreatment: Parental Presence and Number of Children	59-60
12.	Background Effects on the Circumstances of Maltreatment: Age of the Child Named on the Initial Allegation	66-68
13.	Percent of Alleged Maltreatment Cases Found Valid by Background Factors: Sex and Race	72
14.	Percent of Alleged Maltreatment Cases Found Valid by Background Factors: Parental Presence and Number of Children	74
15.	Percent of Alleged Maltreatment Cases Found Valid by Background Factors: Age of Child Allegedly Maltreated	75
16.	Percent of Various Types of Alleged and Actual Maltreatment Cases Found Valid	77

TABLE PAGE

17. Percent of all Reported Alleged Maltreatment Cases Found Valid by the Reporter of Maltreatment, the Alleged and Found Abuser 81

18. Background Effects on Case Dispositon: Sex and Race 86

19. Background Effects on Case Disposition: Parental Presence, Number of Children and Age 87-89

20. The Effect of Reporter of Maltreatment on Case Disposition 92

21. The Effect of the Type of Maltreatment Found by the Investigating Social Worker on Case Dispositon 95

22. Recidivism: Percent with at Least One Subsequent Allegation of Maltreatment by Sex and Race 101

23. Recidivism: Percent with at Least One Subsequent Allegation of Maltreatment by Parental Presence, Number of Children and Age 105

24. Recidivism: Percent with at Least One Subsequent Allegation of Maltreatment by Reporter and Found Abuser 107

25. Recidivism: Percent with at Least One Subsequent Allegation of Maltreatment by the Social Worker's Finding of Maltreatment 112

26. Recidivism: Percent with at Least One Subsequent Allegation of Maltreatment by Case Disposition 115

27. Background Characteristics of Children Alleged as Maltreated, 1971 - 1977: Sex and Race 120

28. Background Characteristics of Children Alleged as Maltreated, 1971 - 1977: Age, Number of Children and Parental Presence 121

29. Proportion of Cases Found Valid and Received on the WATS Line, 1971 - 1977 123

30. Variation in the Reporter of Alleged Maltreatment, the Alleged and Found Abuser, 1971 - 1977 126

31. Variation in Alleged and Found Maltreatment, 1971 - 1977 . . 129

32. Variation in Disposition of Alleged Maltreatment Cases, 1971 - 1977 131

TABLE PAGE

33. Date of First Allegation of Abuse by Year of Last Report 135

34. Time Taken to Respond to an Allegation of Child Maltreatment 136

Acknowledgments

While acknowledgments are unusual in reports such as this, the superb efforts of several people enabled our research funds to stretch further than is ordinarily possible. Obtaining the data was difficult, but the cooperation and interest of Rebecca Goodwin, Director of the Florida Child Abuse Registry helped us surmount the many obstacles. The complex coding procedure was performed with diligence and a sincere effort at precision and objectivity by Paula Bodah, Susan Dauksis, Loretta Maggs and Joyce McDonald. The extraordinary help of all these people is sincerely appreciated. Eileen Hargreaves, Research Assistant, displayed outstanding organizational ability and a sound understanding of the research process. Without her many talents and willingness to go the extra mile, we could have done much less in the time we had available. Her assistance was invaluable to the success of this project, her efforts cannot be fully acknowledged. It is too little to say the work of Eileen was superb. Finally, the personnel at the University of Rhode Island Academic Computer Center were helpful to us, on a continuing basis, as we tried to sort out the best ways of handling our sometimes complex tasks. We thank them.

INTRODUCTION

In the State of Florida, a child abuse law, a central registry for child abuse reporting and a state-wide media campaign were all designed to encourage the reporting of abuse and neglect of children by both informed professionals who come in contact with children and by the public in general. Florida established a 24 hour hotline in October, 1971 and concurrently launched an extensive campaign to inform the public of the need, and its responsibility, to report suspected child maltreatment. The hotline number was listed in the front of all telephone books in Florida, and subsequent reporting of child maltreatment rose from 17 cases in 1970 to over 19,000 cases in the first year of operation (1971) of the media campaign (Nagi, 1977:36).

Our program of research on labeling and classifying cases of child maltreatment (Gelles, 1973, 1975a, 1975b, 1976a, 1977) led us to collect data on cases processed through the Florida Abuse Registry. Our research had four main objectives:

1. We planned to elaborate on some selective tallies kept by the Abuse Registry personnel by examining the relationships between the available demographic variables and the type and nature of the alleged maltreatment. Florida's method of tallying their data precluded any analysis other than one-way frequency distributions.
2. We planned a comparison of valid and invalid cases of alleged maltreatment reported to the Registry. The State could not do this due to the way in which they tallied their data.

3. We proposed to examine "recidivism" of maltreatment among reported cases.[1]

4. Finally, we proposed to examine reported child maltreatment separately for each of the years the Registry has been in operation in an attempt to discover any historical trends and any detectable effects the media campaign may have had.

Our findings are based on a random, cluster sample of all reports of child abuse and neglect received by the State of Florida Child Abuse Registry from 1970 through mid-summer of 1977 when our sample was drawn. Our sample of 2,889 cases is representative of reported cases of child maltreatment in Florida and appears consistent with other data on child maltreatment in Florida, both as compiled by the State of Florida and as presented in other studies of child abuse and neglect in Florida (Nagi, 1977; Sussman and Cohen, 1975; Polansky, Hally and Polansky, 1974).

Our purpose, in this report, is threefold: 1) we will provide protective service workers in Florida with information about the operation of the Abuse Registry and the social service systems associated with it; 2) we will generate hypotheses about the delivery of social services in public child protective agencies; and, 3) we will provide suggestions, empirically based, for improved policy formulation, agency organization and planning of child protective services.

---

[1] All reports in the Abuse Registry files are filed alphabetically under the family name. Thus, reports on all children in any family will be filed together. Similarly, due to the filing procedure, a report on any member of a family will be found under the family name no matter which year(s) the report was received in. The filing of reports under family name groups both children and multiple reports on children within one family, permitting the study of recidivism. The analysis of recidivism is made possible by the filing, the length of time the Registry has existed and the very fact of a central Abuse Registry.

Finally, throughout this report we have used the general term "child maltreatment," recognizing that there is little consensus on what is meant by that term (Gelles, 1977). We have tried to reserve the term "abuse" for physical injury or harm to children, without a judgement about the intent of the responsible caretaker. And, we have used "neglect" for all other actions or omissions that might be perceived by at least some people to be detrimental to the "normal" development of children. While this is not entirely satisfactory (it evades the issue of "definition"), for our purposes it is an alternative that permits examination of the operation of the public child protective service system.

BACKGROUND

Concern over the welfare of children has been an on-going and developing aspect of social welfare programs in general since the 1800s (see, Thomas, 1972, for a review of the legal and social developments in child protective services. Also, DeFrancis, 1955; Fontana, 1970; Katz, 1971; and Sussman and Cohen, 1975). The interest of social scientists, however, is quite new.

Early social scientific research tended to center on defining the problem (Gil, 1971; Gelles, 1973), attempting to estimate the parameters of the prevalence and incidence of child maltreatment (Gil, 1971; Spinetta and Rigler, 1972; Gelles, 1973; Light, 1973; Steinmetz and Straus, 1974; Sussman and Cohen, 1975; and most recently, Nagi, 1977), and proposing theoretical models of the "causes" of child maltreatment or criticizing existing models (Gelles, 1973; Steinmetz and Straus, 1974; Justice and Justice, 1976; Newberger, et al., 1977).

To propose a "causal model" and to test it are two different things. The vast majority of research on the "causes" of child maltreatment has dealt with factors that have been found, in research, to be associated with one or another definition of child maltreatment. As the research has proliferated, the number of such associations has risen almost geometrically, to the point where it is now quite easy to list 30 or 40 "causes" of child maltreatment, factors that have been shown merely to be associated with child maltreatment. And, as nearly no research has attempted to use the methods of causal inference to test the various proposed models of "causes" of child maltreatment, we have

provided very little in the way of guidance for those charged with investigating and taking action in reported cases of child maltreatment. Research, so far, has told child protective workers that just about any trait or characteristic may be a "cause" of child maltreatment (Gil, 1971; Gelles, 1973; Spinetta and Rigler, 1972; Giovannoni and Billingsley, 1970; Kaduschin, 1974; and Polansky et al., 1974).

Currently, in the State of Florida approximately 30,000 children are reported each year as maltreated and about half these children are found to actually have suffered one or another kind of maltreatment -- 15,000 children a year. Many more children are probably maltreated without coming to public attention (Gelles, 1979; Mulligan, 1977).

The location of children who are maltreated and yet not known by public officials who can do something about it is one important research task deserving considerable attention (Gelles, 1977). Evaluative research assessing the relative merits of developmental treatment programs, the use of hotlines, Parents Anonymous programs and programs for the prevention of child maltreatment (e.g., Berkeley Planning Associates, 1977a) represent important efforts in aiding the many children currently receiving inadequate care.

While children reported to public officials as maltreated may differ from children who are not reported, the large number who are reported and are found to actually suffer maltreatment also deserve our research efforts, efforts aimed at understanding the protective service system as it operates now for the protection of children and the prevention of further maltreatment.

The establishment of the Children's Bureau and the Office of Child Development as a part of DHEW has spurred new efforts at evaluating all programs aimed at treating the problem of child maltreatment. In fact, most development programs, programs to develop and try new treatment approaches, must now have built-in evaluation as a condition of funding. Probably, the most extensive effort in this direction is the Health Resources Administration sponsored research by Berkeley Planning Associates (1977a, 1977b) of the eleven programs funded jointly by the DHEW Office of Child Development and Social and Rehabilitative Services.

The Berkeley research was limited: it dealt with eleven new programs, not with the broader system that now exists in nearly all states under the rubric of child protective services. It is on that system that most of the known maltreated children and their families must rely for help. Although the protective service systems vary from state to state, generally it is within the often sprawling welfare and social and rehabilitative services division of the state government that many of the services available to children reported as maltreated are located. It is also here that public and political pressures appear to make change hardest.

If change is needed, and it appears that it is (Berkeley Planning Associates, 1977a, 1977b; Giovannoni and Becerra, 1977), then the case for change demands persuasive, quality research to overcome the potential inertia and resistance of local political divisions.

Research has been conducted on the official system providing services to maltreated children and their families. This research has been limited in important ways. One approach has been to interview those most likely to come in contact with abused or neglected children:

doctors, teachers, the police, social workers, day care workers, and juvenile workers. Gelles (1977) and Nagi (1977) have taken this approach. Often it is the head of a service department or the director of social services who is interviewed or questioned, not the caseworker -- the person most directly involved with the potentially abusive situation. Alfaro (1978) avoided this limitation by examining actual case records in New York, case records written by intake workers, probation personnel, protective service workers, etc. Although his basic purpose was to determine if a relationship existed between early abuse or neglect and later delinquency, a major finding of his study was that very little was done for the child who was reported as maltreated, even among valid maltreatment cases.

Nagi's (1977) research tends to confirm this, although he did not examine actual case records. Caseworkers, Nagi suggests, are quite aware of the limitations of the service they do or can provide.

Giovannoni and Becerra (1977) took an unusual approach by asking social workers to fill out an extended questionnaire on one child maltreatment case (a valid one) per month in four California counties. Thus, they obtained data they deemed required for an adequate examination of the process of treatment in the official system for child protection, and they got this information from the people most directly involved in providing these services. Still, it was from their own perspective that the social workers filled in the questionnaires provided by Giovannoni and Becerra.

Giovannoni and Becerra's research is limited in that social workers, with potential biases, filled in the questionnaires. Further,

only around 900 cases from four counties in California were used. The sample is not representative of even those four counties' caseloads (Giovannoni and Becerra, 1977). Still their approach makes theirs a valuable contribution to the knowledge we have of how the official system treats the problem of child maltreatment, especially when the extensiveness of the questions asked is taken into account.

Alfaro's (1978) approach in New York eliminated the (potential) social worker bias. He hired coders to examine and code actual casework reports in eight counties in New York. His data are in some ways superior in that he examined case records for a twenty year period, thereby having longitudinal data, and having data on both valid and invalid reported cases of child maltreatment. Still, his data are, at best, representative of only eight counties in New York.[2]

With tighter laws governing access to case reports, and time and money constraints, it would probably be unwise to undertake a nationally representative sample of child protection case records, to have data from those records coded independently (eliminating any potential social worker bias), to do so for a long enough period of time to be able to examine factors surrounding reported cases that are found valid, as opposed to invalid, and to examine "recidivism" of maltreatment (or at least reported maltreatment).

However, such a body of data does exist for an entire state -- the State of Florida. This data is in the form of intake social workers' written reports on the circumstances surrounding all allegations of

---

[2]In some of the eight counties records were destroyed and in some cases were selected for only certain months because cost and time constraints precluded sampling the entire caseload for one year -- see Alfaro (1978).

maltreatment of children which, by law, are kept in a central place, the Florida Child Abuse Registry. With these records are the written reports of the social worker who investigated the allegation of maltreatment, his or her findings (validity) and the plan of action to be taken in the case (disposition).

These data are non-interactive (Webb et al., 1966), that is, the social workers involved did not know at the time they wrote the reports that the reports would be used for research purposes, and hence social worker bias (of one potential kind) is eliminated. The data are longitudinal, covering a seven year period. The reports themselves are the basic data of this research, they have been coded by trained coders, eliminating a second potential source of bias (that of the social worker filling out the report as she/he believes the researcher would like to have it done). These data appear to be the best currently available to examine the public social service system as it actually operates -- that system where most of the maltreated children (and those so reported) and their families are "treated."

Although our results cannot be generalized beyond the State of Florida, comparison with studies from other states (particularly, Giovannoni and Becerra, 1977; Alfaro, 1978; Nagi, 1977; and Gelles, 1977) will be possible, suggesting which data findings can and cannot be generalized.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The objective of this study is to understand the ways in which the child protective services work in one large state with a central Child Abuse Registry -- Florida. This report presents the first results of our efforts at understanding the operation of public child protective service systems. In this section, we present some basic definitions used in our research and the hypotheses that guided that research.

Definitions

Our research focuses on reported, alleged maltreatment and is thereby subject to all the problems inherent in trying to define this nebulous phenomenon (Gil, 1970; Gelles, 1973, 1977). We have, in coding and thereby "defining" child maltreatment, kept two things in mind. First, we wished to code maltreatment so that we could compare our sample data with data tallied by the State of Florida during each year since the operation of the Abuse Registry began. Second, we also wished to include only specific, overt behaviors -- behaviors that would be less subjective and more likely to be reliably coded. Thus, we have not included a category such as "emotional neglect."[3]

The coding of maltreatment used available literature, but was in essence a "content analysis" of the reports made available to us by the State of Florida (see Appendix B for the specific codes). We began with codes developed by Alfaro (1978) for coding child abuse and neglect in his study of eight New York counties. We added particular forms of

---

[3]Giovannoni and Becerra (1977) found that the inclusion of such a category was problematic for their analysis.

physical child maltreatment elaborated by Gelles (1974) and read through a hundred or so of the Florida reports looking specifically for variants of "types" of abuse or neglect that had not, in other ways, come to our attention. Our final codes of specific behaviors on the part of the child or his caretaker numbered 84.[4]

Using these 84 types of "maltreatment" we are able to combine both alleged maltreatment and maltreatment actually found to have occurred (by the investigating social worker) in a number of ways: 1) we can categorize maltreatment in ways comparable to Florida's tally sheet data; 2) we can separate physical abuse from other forms of maltreatment; and, 3) we can specify more exactly the nature of maltreatment previously presented on the State of Florida (Nagi, 1977).[5]

Hypotheses

First, we expected that the reports of suspected maltreatment would vary by who made the report. Particularly, we expected that medical professionals would be more likely to report physical abuse (Gelles, 1977). We expected that relatives and neighbors would be more likely to report a variety of forms of maltreatment less likely to come to the attention of professionals. Finally, we expected the higher the social status of the reporter, the greater the chances that the alleged maltreatment would be found valid by the social worker, especially if physical abuse was involved.

---

[4]It is interesting that Giovannoni and Becerra (1977) using a somewhat different procedure, also arrived at almost 100 "types" of child maltreatment.

[5]About one quarter of the cases of suspected child maltreatment previously presented using Florida data have been labeled as "disorganized family life," a rather general category. We have over twenty separate behaviors that make up this more general category and can specify more precisely the kinds of behaviors that others define as "disorganized family life."

Second, we expected that there might be a greater tendency to find a case valid if the type of maltreatment alleged was more serious, if it was reported by a professional particularly those professionals with anaura of power/authority, and if the child alleged to be mistreated came from a background that is "believed" to be in some way detrimental to the sound development of children -- for example, female-headed homes. We also expected that the alleged or actually found abuser might affect the tendency for a case to be found valid.

Third, we expected that the dispostion of a case, as determined by the social worker, would be affected by the type of maltreatment, the validity of the alleged maltreatment (as seen by the social worker), as well as the actual abuser and the reporter of maltreatment. We also expected that disposition might well be affected by the background characteristics of the child alleged as maltreated.

Fourth, we expected "recidivism of reported maltreatment" to be partly dependent on the background of the child alleged to be maltreated, the type of maltreatment involved, the reporter of maltreatment, and the relationship of the abuser to the maltreated child. We particularly expected that the validity of the case and especially the disposition of the case -- those features of the protective service system's treatment resources -- would affect recidivism.

Finally, we welcomed the opportunity to look at these data over time. We were interested in establishing the amount of time most children, both alleged and actually maltreated, remain in the protective service system. We wished to estimate the amount of time it takes protective service workers to respond to allegations of maltreatment, particularly

as response time migh. vary with the "seriousness" of the maltreatment. And, we hoped to note any other changes that may have occurred during this critical time (from 1971 to 1977), a time of increasing public awareness of the problem of abused and neglected children.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Sampling Procedures

Examination of a social service system, as it actually works, requires access to the daily processes and procedures that occur. One could, of course, approach this task by fieldwork methods--participant or non-participant observation techniques. Those methods are, of course, time-consuming and expensive. But, from our point of view the more important danger, especially when seeking to obtain adequate data from those likely to be quite sensitive about their work, is that the mere process of observation will affect the ways in which workers in the system perform their tasks. We could also have used interviews and/or questionnaires. Such a procedure would have been less costly, but again we would have risked researcher-effects "contaminating" the data collected.

We chose, therefore, to use the actual case records, as written by social workers themselves at the time when the case was "active." Use of official records is problematic, especially in such a sensitive area as that of child maltreatment (Gelles, 1978). Yet, as our focus is the system as it operates, the limitations of official records is somewhat diminished.

The State of Florida was most cooperative in allowing us to sample their records and to photocopy the complete records filed at the Abuse Registry. Cases are filed by family, with each separate report on any child in a family being filed under the family name (and they are cross-referenced where two or more children in one family have different last names), facilitating the sample selection.

The reports are of two varieties: a) there is an allegation report, a form filled out by an intake worker specifying demographic information about the child being reported as maltreated and a written statement of the nature of maltreatment alleged; and, b) there is an investigation report filled out by a worker after contact with the family and the child alleged as maltreated. The latter report specifies whether or not the alleged maltreatment (or any other) actually occurred and what actions, if any, the protective service workers plan to take.

Access to the Abuse Registry files is limited by law to Abuse Registry personnel (as long as the reporter of maltreatment is still identifiable): the investigators were thus unable to personally draw the sample. The Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services (and the Abuse Registry) therefore agreed to assign personnel to draw the sample, black-out the identity of the reporter and then photocopy the actual reports (all reports) for each family in the sample.

We provided the personnel at the Child Abuse Registry with instructions for drawing the sample (see Appendix A) and they drew the sample for us from mid-summer through September of 1977. They blacked out the reporter's identity and wrote in the relationship of the reporter to the child alleged as maltreated, and then photocopied all reports for each family included in the sample. The final sample is a random, cluster sample of all cases in the Abuse Registry files at that time--2,889 families (Appendix A contains the specific sampling procedures used by the Abuse Registry personnel.)

Our most frequent unit of analysis is the first child named on the first allegation report for maltreatment for a family. Of course, in reality, often the maltreatment charge is against the family and concerns

all the children who are living at home. We chose to select the first named child, and code most of our data about that child (see Florida Coding Instructions, Appendix B).

Coding

We have already mentioned our detailed coding of "types" of alleged and found maltreatment (Specific Objectives, Definitions, above). We also developed a detailed and complex coding procedure so that we would be able to capture a maximum amount of information about the alleged incident of maltreatment reported to the Abuse Registry.

In addition to coding 84 "types" of maltreatment, we established elaborate codes for certain significant people's relationship to the child allegedly maltreated (including the reporter of maltreatment, the alleged abuser, the person, if any, found to actually be the abuser, and whom the child lived with). We developed 244 codes for the case plan (disposition) resulting from the social worker's investigation. We coded the validity of the case as determined by the social worker. We coded various demographic information available (age, sex, race and the number of siblings of the child allegedly maltreated). Finally, the dates of the allegation and investigation reports, and dates of contacts between protective service workers and the family reported for maltreatment were coded.

Our initial interest in examining recidivism of maltreatment (alleged or found) led us to code two additional variables from the Florida social workers' reports. Although the majority of reports (about 80 percent) contained only one allegation of maltreatment and one investigation of that allegation, in about 20 percent of the cases there were

additional "allegation-investigation sets," representing multiple incidents of reported maltreatment. For each family we coded the number of alleged incidents, after the first one, in which the allegation of maltreatment was either: a) more serious (or equally serious) than that alleged in the initial report; or, b) less serious than that alleged in the first report. These variables enable us to examine, in several ways, "recidivism" of reported child maltreatment.

In effect, the codes became, for some variables, a content analysis of the written information provided on the Abuse Registry case records. Appendix B contains detailed instructions and the codes for these variables.

Our coding procedure required that we train coders and provide a detailed set of coding instructions for them (Appendix B). Additionally, the research assistant and the author were on hand during the entire coding procedure to supervise the coding process. We required coders to keep lists of any variable for which they were uncertain of the appropriate code. These "uncertain" codes were then checked by two additional people, the research assistant and the author, in order to insure the maximum reliability possible. As the first 150 reports were most difficult for the coders to code (they had not yet learned the coding instructions well), these reports were coded a second time by a different coder.

Our complex coding scheme, the ability to re-examine the actual reports and our extensive training of coders minimized missing data for many of the variables we coded. Table 1 presents the percent of missing data for the major variables used in this preliminary analysis.

Table 1. Missing Data

	N=2889
Most serious alleged maltreatment	.3%
Next most serious alleged maltreatment	32.5
Most serious "found" maltreatment (by social worker)	4.0
Next most serious "found" maltreatment (by social worker)	76.9
Race	1.5
Sex	1.2
Age of alleged maltreated child	3.5
Number of children in family	0.0
Parental presence in the home	0.0
Reporter	2.9
Alleged abuser	6.8
Abuser after investigation	6.9
Validity	.8*
Disposition	1.3
Response time	22.5
Date of first allegation report	1.4
Date of first investigation report	17.8
Date of last report	13.5
Recidivism, more serious	.1
Recidivism, less serious	.1

*In an additional 11.6 percent of the cases the social worker's judgement about the validity of the case was ambiguous. We have excluded these cases from further analysis. The variable "most serious 'found' maltreatment (by social workers)" supplies additional information on case validity.

It is clear in Table 1 that for most variables there is very little missing data. The large amount of missing data for the "next most serious type of maltreatment" merely reflects that for many allegations of maltreatment only one type of behavior is reported. The only other variables with large proportions of missing data are variables that are report dates, or are dependent on the availability of report dates. Social workers appear to be quite careful to record the date an allegation of maltreatment is received, but are not as consistent in recording the date on which they file their investigation reports. Thus, the date of the first investigation report and the date of the last report of any kind--usually an investigation report--are missing for well over ten percent of the cases.

Reliability

Our procedure for insuring that all reports on all children in each family in the sample were together required that we alphabetize the reports by family name. The reports were then numbered consecutively. Any subset of the original sample (random), then, should also be a random sample (except for a potential alphabetical bias).

We have examined the reliability of our data in two ways: 1) we divided our sample into three subsamples and tested the probability that these subsamples came from the same population; and, 2) we compared our sample data with data tallied by Florida officials for fiscal 1975-1976.[6]

---

[6]The data tallied by Florida is not a sample, but includes all reports recorded during a particular fiscal year. Tallies for fiscal 1975-76 were arbitrarily chosen as that year's data was given to us by Florida officials. Nagi (1977) appears to have similar data, tallied by Florida, for fiscal 1972.

We purposely divided our sample into three particular subsamples: 1) the first 1,000 reports coded; 2) the second 1,000 reports coded; and, 3) the final 889 reports coded. In this way, we could test not only the probability that each subsample was drawn from the same population, but also examine whether or not coding appeared to change significantly over the five months devoted to that task.[7]

In principle, our three subsamples are also random and therefore representative of all reported child maltreatment in the State of Florida. We calculated t values and the associated probabilities (using $P < .05$ as our criterion for rejection of the null hypothesis that the subsamples were drawn from the same population). The central variables in our analysis--demographic variables, types of maltreatment, reporter of maltreatment, alleged and actual abuser/neglector, validity of maltreatment and disposition of the case--were subjected to this analysis and the results are presented in Table 2.

Of 42 comparisons we were able to reject the null hypothesis only ten times. For only one variable was it possible to reject the null hypothesis for the comparisons of all three combinations of subsamples. Considering the complexity of coding, it seems clear that for the most part these data in the subsamples appear to come from the same population.

As the subsamples were constructed according to the time when they were coded,[8] it also appears that the coding remained reliable to the

---

[7]If any code for any variable was proportionately more often chosen (or less often chosen) as the coding proceeded, then we would see a systematic increase (or decrease) in the proportion that code represented over the three subsamples. This, of course, would lead us to suspect that the basis for selecting a particular code for a variable had changed over the long period devoted to coding. Reliability of the data would, in that case, be suspect.

[8]The first 150 cases of the first subsample were later recoded and thus add an unknown measure of error to this procedure.

Table 2. Coding Reliability:
A Comparison of Three Subsamples

	Subsamples 1 and 2		Subsamples 2 and 3		Subsamples 1 and 3	
	t	2-tail probability	t	2-tail probability	t	2-tail probability
Sex	-0.66	.509	-1.78	.075	-1.17	.244
Race	-0.64	.523	-0.58	.562	0.03	.977
Age	1.69	.092	-0.12	.903	-1.75	.080
Parental presence	-0.21	.830	-1.63	.103	-1.40	.161
Number of children	0.19	.850	0.35	.729	0.16	.870
First alleged maltreatment	1.35	.176	-1.21	.225	-2.23	.026*
Second alleged maltreatment	1.17	.243	0.64	.520	-0.49	.621
First found maltreatment	-2.00	.046*	-4.75	.000*	-2.86	.004*
Second found maltreatment	1.78	.075	2.92	.004*	1.16	.246
Reporter	-2.76	.006*	-1.34	.180	1.47	.143
Alleged abuser	0.29	.774	-0.03	.975	-0.31	.755
Found abuser	-1.85	.064	-3.73	.000*	-1.96	.050*
Validity	-0.26	.793	-1.53	.126	-1.28	.199
Disposition	0.33	.742	-2.15	.032*	-2.48	.013*

Subsample 1 N = 1,000
Subsample 2 N = 1,000
Subsample 3 N = 889

*$p < .05$

same degree even though it was a sustained effort carried on over five months. The t value generated in comparing subsamples 1 and 3 is larger than that of the comparison of subsamples 1 and 2 or subsamples 2 and 3 in three instances where statistical significance was achieved. This indicates that for the first and second type of maltreatment and for the person found to be the abuser after investigation, the coding may have changed during the coding process.

Table 3 presents the frequency distributions, for each subsample, for the key variables subjected to this analysis. For the type of maltreatment found by the social worker the differences, while statistically significant (Table 2), are small. They are generally not linear from subsample 1 to subsample 3. The significance and direction of the t values in Table 2 appears to be the collective result of several small and subtle "changes" in coding.

The person found by the social worker to be the abuser after investigation does show one progressive, but not linear, change in coding from subsample 1 to subsample 3: the mother was coded as the found abuser about seven percent more often in the first 1,000 reports coded than in the last group coded. There is reason for concern about the reliability of coding in this variable. However, the overall lack of coding reliability problems is the more dramatic result shown in Tables 2 and 3, especially considering the complexity of coding.

It is important to enlarge on the differences that appear to have resulted in the small number of instances where our three subsamples seem to come from different populations. It is important that the variables under consideration (those with asterisks in Table 2) are consistently among those variables most difficult to code (see Appendix B). The more

Table 3. Frequencies of Key Variables for Three Subsamples

	1st 1000 cases	2nd 1000 cases	Last 889 cases	All cases
Sex	N=993	N=990	N=870	N=2853
Males	48.1%	48.6%	51.0%	49.3%
Females	51.6	51.4	49.0	50.7
Missing	.7%	1.0%	2.1%	1.2%
Race	N=968	N=968	N=859	N=2796
White	78.6%	78.3%	80.0%	78.9%
Black	21.4	21.7	20.0	21.1
Missing	3.2%	3.2%	3.4%	3.2%
Age	N=960	N=976	N=852	N=2789
Under 3	22.2%	21.4%	23.1%	22.2%
3 to 6	21.4	23.2	22.8	22.4
Under 7	43.6	44.6	46.0	44.6
7 or older	56.5	55.4	54.1	55.4
Missing	4.0%	2.4%	4.1%	3.5%

Table 3: Continued

	1st 1000 cases	2nd 1000 cases	Last 889 cases	All cases
Number of Children	N=907	N=909	N=806	N=2662
1	38.4%	43.6%	43.9%	41.3%
2	26.1	23.3	26.2	26.5
3	17.5	14.9	15.5	16.1
4	9.7	9.0	6.9	8.3
5	4.2	3.9	3.7	3.7
6	2.3	2.9	1.9	2.2
7	1.0	1.0	1.1	0.9
8	0.2	0.7	0.4	0.4
9	0.1	0.4	0.2	0.2
10	0.1	0.2	- -*	0.1
11	0.3	0.2	0.0	0.2
14	0.0	0.0	0.1	- -*
Mean	2.3	2.3	2.2	2.2
Missing	9.3%	9.1%	9.3%	7.9%
Parental Presence	N=1000	N=1000	N=889	N=2889
Both present	39.3%	39.8%	36.4%	38.6%
Mother only	43.6	43.0	43.3	43.4
Father only	6.9	5.7	9.0	7.1
None present	10.2	11.5	11.2	10.9
Missing	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %

*Less than 0.1 percent.

Table 3: Continued

	1st 1000 cases	2nd 1000 cases	Last 889 cases	All cases
Reporter	N=980	N=958	N=867	N=2805
Medical personnel	9.0%	9.5%	8.3%	8.9%
Police	11.0	11.0	9.9	10.7
School personnel	10.1	9.7	7.7	9.2
Court/Lawyer	1.5	0.8	1.5	1.3
Division of Youth Services	3.2	2.7	3.3	3.1
Clergy	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.2
Social Workers	7.3	9.7	8.1	8.4
Institutions	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.1
Relatives	24.9	23.9	21.9	23.6
Neighbors	20.3	20.4	23.5	21.4
Babysitter	0.9	0.6	0.6	0.7
Anonymous	8.9	8.2	11.6	9.5
Other	2.2	3.2	3.3	2.9
Missing	2.0%	4.2%	2.5%	2.9%

Table 3: Continued

	1st 1000 cases	2nd 1000 cases	Last 889 cases	All cases
Alleged Abuser	N=982	N=985	N=872	N=2839
Mother	51.6%	46.1%	48.5%	48.8%
Father	14.4	14.1	16.1	14.8
Both parents	19.3	22.1	20.8	20.7
Stepmother	0.9	1.5	1.1	1.2
Stepfather	5.1	6.0	5.3	5.5
Mother's boyfriend	1.4	1.6	1.4	1.5
Aunt	0.2	0.9	0.7	0.6
Grandmother	1.3	1.3	1.0	1.2
Babysitter	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.6
Other	4.0	5.0	4.1	4.4
No abuser	1.1	.6	0.5	.7
Missing	1.8%	1.5%	1.9%	1.7%
Abuser after Investigation	N=946	N=933	N=811	N=2690
Mother	27.4%	22.2%	19.1%	23.1%
Father	9.6	7.6	6.7	8.0
Both parents	10.0	9.2	9.5	9.6
Stepmother	0.3	1.2	0.7	0.7
Stepfather	2.5	3.2	3.2	3.0
Mother's boyfriend	1.0	.8	0.9	0.9
Aunt	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.4
Grandmother	0.8	0.4	0.5	0.6
Babysitter	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.4
Other	14.0	10.9	16.3	13.6
No Abuser	33.6	43.4	42.4	39.7
Missing	5.4%	6.7%	8.8%	6.9%

Table 3: Continued

	1st 1000 cases	2nd 1000 cases	Last 889 Cases	All cases
Most Serious Alleged Maltreatment	N=998	N=998	N=883	N=2879
Sexual abuse	3.6%	2.7%	2.9%	3.1%
Death	0.0	0.0	0.1	.0003
Injury, a result of beating	12.3	16.0	13.5	14.0
Beating, no injury	16.6	18.5	16.0	17.1
Malnutrition	1.2	1.1	0.8	1.0
Medical neglect	9.1	9.3	9.2	9.2
Disorganized family life	26.7	24.1	26.5	25.7
Abandonment	2.9	3.1	2.5	2.8
Left unattended	10.7	9.8	11.6	10.7
Lack of food, shelter, clothing	8.6	8.9	11.2	9.5
School problems	1.4	1.5	1.1	1.4
No abuse	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.3
Custody case	2.3	1.6	1.6	1.8
Other	4.3	2.7	2.9	3.3
Missing	0.2%	0.2%	0.6%	0.3%
Second Most Serious Alleged Maltreatment	N=683	N=668	N=600	N=1951
Sexual abuse	2.9%	0.4%	1.3%	1.6%
Death	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Injury, a result of beating	1.5	3.0	1.7	2.1
Beating, no injury	4.2	6.7	6.7	5.8
Malnutrition	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.2
Medical neglect	6.4	7.0	6.0	6.5
Disorganized family life	60.0	59.3	59.7	59.7
Abandonment	0.6	0.4	0.3	0.5
Left unattended	5.6	5.8	6.2	5.8
Lack of food, shelter, clothing	4.7	6.4	7.0	6.0
School problems	4.8	3.7	4.0	4.2
No abuse	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1
Custody case	4.7	3.3	4.3	4.1
Other	4.2	3.3	2.7	3.4
Missing	31.7%	33.2%	32.5%	32.5%

Table 3: Continued

	1st 1000 cases	2nd 1000 cases	Last 889 Cases	All Cases
Most Serious Maltreatment Found by Social Worker	N=976	N=963	N=833	N=2772
Sexual abuse	2.5%	1.6%	1.1%	1.7%
Death	0.0	0.1	0.0	.0004
Injury, a result of beating	5.1	5.0	3.7	4.7
Beating, no injury	5.7	6.2	5.3	5.8
Malnutrition	0.3	0.2	0.0	0.2
Medical neglect	5.5	3.6	4.4	4.6
Disorganized family life	26.0	23.7	23.5	24.5
Abandonment	1.4	1.6	1.4	1.5
Left unattended	3.2	2.5	3.1	2.9
Lack of food, shelter clothing	1.3	0.8	1.7	1.3
School problems	1.1	1.5	1.6	1.4
No abuse	25.9	34.1	30.6	30.2
Custody case	4.4	4.2	4.6	4.4
Family moved, not able to locate	7.5	7.6	11.0	8.6
Other	9.9	7.5	7.9	8.5
Missing	2.4%	3.7%	6.3%	4.0%
Next Most Serious Maltreatment Found by Social Worker	N=266	N=219	N=181	N=666
Sexual abuse	1.5%	1.4%	1.7%	1.5%
Death	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Injury, a result of beating	3.4	1.8	1.1	2.3
Beating, no injury	3.0	4.1	3.3	3.5
Malnutrition	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.2
Medical neglect	3.8	3.7	6.1	4.4
Disorganized family life	62.4	56.2	58.6	59.3
Abandonment	0.4	0.5	0.0	0.3
Left unattended	1.1	0.9	1.7	1.2
Lack of food, shelter, clothing	0.4	0.5	1.1	0.6
School problems	1.9	2.7	5.5	3.2
No abuse	6.8	11.9	11.0	9.6
Custody case	6.4	9.6	2.8	6.5
Family moved, not able to locate	0.4	0.9	1.1	0.8
Other	8.6	5.9	5.5	6.9
Missing	73.4%	78.1%	79.6%	76.9%

Table 3: Continued

	1st 1000 cases	2nd 1000 cases	Last 889 cases	All cases
Validity	N=897	N=889	N=743	N=2531
Valid	58.9%	59.1%	58.1%	58.8%
Invalid	41.0	40.9	41.9	41.2
Missing	10.3%	11.1%	16.4%	12.4%
Disposition of Case after Investigation	N=991	N=991	N=870	N=2852
Case closed	33.0%	38.6%	37.4%	36.3%
Could not locate family	7.9	8.0	10.8	8.8
Limited services provided	13.2	12.8	9.9	12.1
Supervision provided	11.8	9.6	10.1	10.5
Both supervision & services provided	4.8	4.6	5.5	5.0
Services provided	4.8	3.7	3.7	4.1
Foster care	2.2	2.7	1.6	2.2
Placed with relative	5.3	5.9	5.6	5.6
Referred to another agency	6.6	4.2	4.3	5.0
Emergency shelter only provided	0.4	0.1	0.2	0.2
Client terminated services	2.1	0.8	1.3	1.4
Child removed from the home	2.8	3.2	3.6	3.2
Case is still pending	4.0	3.9	4.7	4.2
Social Worker was unable to make a disposition	0.8	0.5	0.8	0.7
Other	0.1	1.2	0.6	0.6
Missing	0.9%	0.9%	2.1%	1.3%

straight-forward coding for the various demographic variables appears, by this procedure, to have been reliable.

The three variables that show the most problematic t-test results (the first found type of maltreatment, the abuser after the investigation by the social worker and the disposition of the case) are also particularly difficult items: coding was complex and extremely vulnerable to subjectivity. In the first two variables the coder had to assess from the written report of the social worker exactly what the social worker had in mind. The latter variable was difficult to code in that 244 categories were available to the coders and reflected "multi-stage" dispositions, that is, dispositions that planned one action for the client to be followed by another action, etc.

The most serious reliability problem identified in Table 2 is in the variable "abuser after investigation"--found abuser. Much of the problem results from the third subsample having about twice as many missing cases as the other two subsamples (Table 3).[9] However, there is also wide variation in the category "no abuser." If this were consistently uni-directional, growing uniformly larger or smaller from subsample 1 to subsample 3, then we would have serious doubts about this variable. This is not the case (Table 3). Additionally, we have another variable, validity, that taps some of this same information in a slightly altered form.

Looking at the frequencies for other variables shown by this analysis to be somewhat problematic (Table 3), we can see that for the

---

[9]We have already discussed the problem in the subsamples of the proportion where the mother is the found abuser.

reporter of the alleged abuse the largest difference appears to be in the missing data category. Disposition of the case tends to show a larger number of cases that are "closed" in subsample 3 than in subsample 1. The first type of maltreatment alleged is more often "disorganized family life," and "lack of food, shelter and clothing" in subsample 3. This variable also shows that "injury" is more frequently coded in subsample 3, while "beating without injury" is more common in subsample 2--almost three percent more common.

Our second procedure for assessing the reliability of our data was to compare, where possible, our variables with data tallied by Florida for fiscal 1975-76. Tables 4 through 6 and Tables 8 and 9 present these results. Our sample data, where comparisons are possible, are remarkably consistent with the Florida tally sheet data.[10] For only two variables where we can make a comparison is there a difference, in any category, of more than four percent. The difference is never greater than seven percent.

The alleged abuser in cases where it is the mother may be underestimated in our data by about four percent. For the first alleged maltreatment type, our data appear to underrepresent the category "disorganized family life" by about six percent and the category "left unattended" by about seven percent. The underrepresentation of "disorganized family life" in our data may be a result of the large number of

---

[10]Of course, some of our sample may be included in the tally sheet data but as our sample covers seven years and as it contains only 2,889 cases as opposed to over 35,000 cases in the tally sheet data, this should not be a problem of great concern.

categories (30) "collapsed" to form a category comparable to the Florida tally sheet data.

For all three of these variables we have additional categories that Florida did not include, specifically, "no abuser" and "custody conflict." All things considered, our sample data of 2,889 cases appear remarkably consistent with the data tallied for fiscal 1975-76 by the officials of the Child Abuse Registry of Florida, and this lends a measure of confidence to the value and the reliability of our sample data.

Validity

For the most part, in this analysis, we are limited to "construct validity." However, comparison of our variable distributions with other studies of the official system of protective services will provide some measure of the degree to which our variables, as defined, actually are tapping the dimensions of the operation of child protective agencies that we anticipated measuring. In particular, studies that have examined particular underlying dimensions of the operation of these agencies, such as that by Giovannoni and Becerra (1977), will be useful in this regard.

Advantages

First, we coded the data (rather than having social workers do the coding where there may be a potential bias, one quite different from the bias we might bring to these data), and the data were coded from the actual reports written by social workers at the time of the alleged maltreatment incident and the investigation of that incident. Thus, our data are reflective of the system as it operates on a day-to-day basis, and more importantly are "non-interactive" (Webb et al., 1966). Second, our data are a representative sample of all reported maltreatment cases

in the State of Florida from 1970 through mid-1977. Our data, then, are also longitudinal, an important third advantage. Fourth, our sample is representative of an entire state, a large state and a state that has been very active in promoting the reporting of child maltreatment (Sussman and Cohen, 1975). This state has legally mandated that child maltreatment (suspected) be reported to a central Registry. Thus, we are not confronted with the frequent problem of county-kept records, where the mobility of families across county borders precludes fuller knowledge of the number of times a family is in contact with child protective agencies. Finally, this state has been shown to fall within the upper and lower limits of estimated child abuse and neglect in the United States (Nagi, 1977). Projections from this state to the nation as a whole, while risky, are not entirely out of order.

Limitations

Our sample size is small in terms of the number of reports the State of Florida received from 1970 to 1977--roughly estimated at about 160,000 reports.[11] Thus, our sample is under two percent of the cases on record at the Abuse Registry. Second, our data are limited to one state. As seen above, the particular characteristics of that State have an advantageous aspect, but as indeed this State has features that are unique, generalization to the nation as a whole is risky. Third, our sample is drawn from the central Child Abuse Registry and we may not have included

---

[11]Estimating the number of cases on file is particularly difficult. Rebecca Goodwin, Director of the Abuse Registry, in a personal communication, estimated there were between 180,000 and 200,000 reports, while figures derived from the tally sheet data suggest about 160,000 reports. Our exact figure, derived by extrapolating from three sources, is 158,425 reports, in some cases on the same family.

in our sample some children that many people would include as children officially reported for child abuse and neglect. Some children will come in contact with the official system for abuse or neglect, not through the child protective services, but through the juvenile justice system. The high association between reported juvenile offenses and prior contact for child maltreatment found by Alfaro (1978) in New York suggests this. Offenses such as "staying out late" and truancy might well be handled without reference to the Child Abuse Registry, and thus, we would not include all children we might wish to include. Some juvenile offenses might be more reflective of child maltreatment and not be "true" juvenile offenses. Finally, some would say that the use of official statistics (as these data clearly represent) is in itself a serious limitation. However, as it is the official system that is the focus of this research, this use of official statistics appears to be most appropriate. However, as social workers with purposes quite different from our research purposes wrote the reports that constitute our data, some relevant data is unavailable. Some data is missing in almost all reports (for example, data on the socio-economic status of these families), and other data is not necessarily present consistently. In some cases details of the investigation such as the exact number of phone calls, home visits, and other attempts to contact the family of the allegedly maltreated child must appear to be unnecessary information to record, as far as the social worker is concerned. Such information may well be recorded elsewhere, but is not necessarily included in all cases on the form forwarded to the central Registry. To this extent the use of official data is a disadvantage, but one that seems, at this point in time, unavoidable.

SAMPLE DISTRIBUTIONS

In this section, we examine the basic characteristics of our sample and compare our data to that tallied by Florida for fiscal 1975-76 (where possible). We present background data on the children alleged as maltreated and compare it to population data for the state of Florida. We examine the types of maltreatment alleged and found, on investigation, to have occurred. We show data on significant persons involved in the alleged maltreatment incident: the alleged abuser, the person found to be the abuser after investigation, and the reporter of alleged maltreatment. Finally, we present data on the response of protective services workers to the alleged maltreatment incident: the determination of the validity of the case and the actions protective services workers plan to take in the case (disposition).

Background Characteristics

About one half of our sample is male and about one half female (Table 4). Other researchers (Gelles, 1974) have found males to be at a slightly greater risk of being abused, but research conducted by the author shows that at least among reported child maltreatment cases males and females are about evenly distributed (Carr, 1977). The tallied data from Florida is consistent with this finding.

Twenty percent of our children reported as maltreated are Black (Table 4). Nagi (1977), using Florida tally sheet data for fiscal 1972, reports about 14 percent were Black and in the fiscal 1975-76 data provided to us by Florida, Blacks account for about 11 percent. Census data for the entire State of Florida indicate a declining population of

Table 4: A Comparison of Sample Data and Florida Tally Sheet Data: Sex and Race

	Our Sample	Florida Fiscal 1975-1976	Florida Population Data*
Sex	N=2853		
Males	49.3%	NA**	48.2%
Females	50.7	NA	51.8
Missing	1.2%		
Race	N=2843		
White	77.6%	NA	84.2%
Black	20.7	NA	15.3
Oriental	0.2	NA	
Latin American	1.1	NA	
Other	0.4	NA	
Missing	1.6%		
Race and Sex	N=2779	N=35421	
White male	39.7%	37%	40.7%
White female	39.3	39	43.5
Black male	9.6	11	7.3
Black female	11.4	11	8.0
Missing	3.8%		

*Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population: 1970. Vol. 1 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POPULATIONS, Part 11, Florida, Section 1, Table 20.

**NA = Not available in the Florida Tally Sheet data.

Blacks: in 1970 they constituted 15.3 percent of the population, while the 1975 census estimates indicate 14.2 percent Black (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1977). Blacks may be slightly overrepresented in our sample of those reported for child maltreatment.

Until recently, it was believed that child maltreatment was more frequent among very young children. In our sample, about one-fifth are indeed very young--under three years old (Table 5). About a quarter of our sample children are between three and six years old, and over fifty percent are over six. Reported child maltreatment is frequent among very young children, but importantly, it is by no means confined to them. Our sample data are consistent with both data tallied by Florida (Table 5) and with Nagi's results (1977). Population data reveal that our sample does overrepresent the youngest children, those under three, and underrepresents older children.

The mean number of children in the homes of the children reported as maltreated is just over two children per family (Table 5). This appears contrary to much child abuse literature which tends to find an association between family size and child maltreatment. However, our sample probably includes many "incomplete" families--young families which at the time they are reported for child maltreatment have only one or two children, and yet families who may later have more children.[12] It seems likely that young families with only one or two children may be overrepresented among those who come to official attention for child maltreatment.

---

[12]Families with older children could be examined in order to specify more clearly the association between being reported for maltreatment and larger families. If the child reported is older he is more likely to come from a "complete" or nearly "complete" family, and that type of family will more clearly reveal the association between family size and being reported as maltreated.

Table 5. A Comparison of Sample Data and Florida Tally Sheet Data: Age, Number of Children and Parental Presence

	Our Sample	Florida Fiscal 1975-1976	Florida Population Data*
Age	N=2789	N=35421	
Under 3	22.2%	21%	14.0%
3 to 6	22.4	25	20.8
under 7	44.6	46	34.8
over 6	55.4	54	65.1
Missing	3.5%		
Number of Children in the Family	N=2622		
1	41.3%	NA	NA
2	26.5		
3	16.1		
4	8.3		
5	3.7		
6	2.2		
7	.9		
8	.4		
9	.2		
10	.1		
11	.2		
12	0.0		
13	0.0 ***		
14	--		
Missing	0.0%		
Mean	2.2		
Parental presence	N=2889		
Both parents	38.6%		
Mother only	43.4	NA	11.9**
Father only	7.1		
Neither parent	10.9		

*Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population: 1970. Vol. 1 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POPULATIONS, Part 11, Florida, Section 1 Table 20.

**Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, COUNTY AND CITY DATA BOOK: 1972.

***Less than .01 percent.

The families of children reported as maltreated are "incomplete" in another sense: more often than not one or the other parent or caretaker is absent. More than half of the children in our sample do not live within two-parent families. Over 40 percent live with their mothers, less than ten percent with their fathers, and about ten percent live with neither parent. Among reported child maltreatment cases in eight New York counties 41 percent lived with only their mothers and 15 percent lived with only their fathers (Carr, Gelles and Hargreaves, 1978). Population data for Florida reveal that 11.9 percent of Florida families are female-headed. It seems clear our sample children do come from homes that are unusual in that both a man and a woman are not present as parents and caretakers.

Types of Maltreatment--Alleged and Found

The most serious alleged form of maltreatment is physical abuse in over 30 percent of our sample (Table 6). The social worker's investigation of these cases of abuse confirms that physical abuse did in fact occur in over ten percent of all these reported cases, that is, one in three cases alleging physical abuse were substantiated. The State of Florida is receiving about 30,000 reports of child maltreatment each year (Nagi, 1977), 10,000 of these children are alleged to be physically abused and about 3,500 are found, after investigation, to have been physically abused each year.

Polansky and his associates (1974) separated suspected maltreatment cases in Florida into abuse and neglect cases. They found suspected (alleged) abuse cases represented 23.7 percent of all reported cases, a figure substantially lower than our 34 percent alleged physical abuse cases. Polansky et al. had no data on confirmed cases.

Table 6. A Comparison of Sample Data and Florida Tally Sheet Data: Alleged and Found Child Maltreatment

	Our Sample	Florida, Fiscal 1975-1976
Most "Serious" Alleged Maltreatment	N=2879	N=35421
Sexual abuse	3.1%	3%
Death	0.0003	0.0014
Injury or beating with injury	14.0	10
Beating, no serious injury	17.1	15
Malnutrition	1.0	1
Medical neglect	9.2	6
Disorganized family life	25.7	32
Abandonment	2.8	4
Left unattended	10.7	18
Lack of food, shelter or clothing	9.5	6
School problems	1.4	2 *
No abuse/neglect	0.3	--*
Custody case	1.8	--*
Other	3.3	--
Missing	0.3%	
Most "Serious" Found by the Social Worker	N=2772	NA**
Sexual abuse	1.7%	
Death	0.0004	
Injury or beating with injury	4.7	
Beating, no serious injury	5.8	
Malnutrition	0.2	
Medical neglect	4.5	
Disorganized family life	24.5	
Abandonment	1.5	
Left unattended	2.9	
Lack of food, shelter or clothing	1.3	
School problems	1.4	
No abuse	30.2	
Custody case	4.4	
Family moved, unable to locate	8.6	
Other	8.5	
Missing	4.0%	

*The Florida Tally Sheet data do not include these categories.

**NA = not availabe in the Florida Tally Sheet data.

Nagi (1977) uses Polansky and his associates' Florida estimate of suspected abuse to project a national estimate of 237,100 suspected abuse cases each year. Our projection is 336,338 alleged physical abuse cases, nationally each year (Table 7).

Sussman and Cohen (1975:129) report that 56 percent of all alleged maltreatment cases in Florida are determined to be valid.[13] Nagi (1977) using the 56 percent estimate, projects that nationally there were 132,776 valid abuse cases. In our data, just over 12 percent of all reported cases were found, by the investigating social worker, to involve physical abuse (including sexual abuse). Our projection of confirmed physical abuse, then, is 118,708 cases nationally each year.

Although we have used a somewhat different procedure, our results are quite similar to Nagi's. Our procedure results in a more conservative estimate of confirmed abuse. Our data also suggest there are more reported and confirmed neglect cases, nationally, each year.

For the State of Florida, to which our projections are generalizable (the sample is representative), we project 3,600 confirmed abuse cases each year and an additional 13,500 confirmed neglect cases. Clearly, the figures in Table 7 indicate a very large number of children are being reported for and being found to have been abused or neglected each year in Florida.

---

[13] We found that 58.8 percent of all reported cases were valid. We have not, at this point, calculated the percent of either alleged or found maltreatment cases that are valid. Instead, we have separated the types of maltreatment found by the social worker into abuse or neglect, and several other categories, and used these percentages (Table 6) to calculate the percentage of "valid" abuse and neglect cases.

Table 7: Projections to Florida's Population and the U.S. Population

	Projections to Florida Population	Projections to the U. S. Population
Number of children under 18*	2,109,041	69,664,081
Total number of reported abuse or neglect cases	30,000 (estimated)	989,230
Percent of Florida population under 18 reported as abused/ neglected	1.42%	
Percent reported, suspected abused	34%**	
Number	10,200	336,338
Percent reported, suspected neglected	64%**	
Number	19,200	633,107
Percent reported confirmed abuse	12%	
Number	3,600	118,708
Percent reported and confirmed neglected	45%***	
Number	13,500	445,154
Total reported and confirmed abused and neglected children each year	17,100	563,862

*Based on the 1970 Census.

**Two percent are either custody cases or other non-abuse, non-neglect cases.

***These percentages are derived from Table 6. Thirty percent are not confirmed, and the remaining thirteen percent are custody cases, or non-abuse, non-neglect cases. "Abuse" includes the first four categories.

Persons Alleged and Found to Maltreat Children

Mothers are more likely to be the alleged abuser and the abuser after the case has been investigated (Table 8). The father is the alleged abuser in about 15 percent of all reported cases. The father is the abuser after investigation half as often as he is alleged as abuser. The mother is found to be the abuser less than half as often as she is accused. However, there is little evidence here to suggest that either the mother is more often considered responsible for the child's care (and therefore more often alleged and found as the abuser), or that the mother actually is more often the alleged and found abuser. We have not controlled for the large proportion of cases where no father is present (Table 5).

Examining the alleged abuser and the abuser after investigation, controlling for type of maltreatment is also likely to be important. The "abuser" in abuse cases may be quite different than in neglect cases--both the alleged abuser and the abuser after investigation. Time precludes our including these data now.

The next most frequent alleged abuser is the stepfather, and the stepfather is, after the parents, the next most likely to be found after investigation to be the abuser. To the extent that being a steparent reflects an unstable home environment, stress and structural deviation from the norms about how families should be structured in our society, then remarriage may indeed be a contributing factor in child maltreatment cases. If the maltreatment is neglect, then, the problem may lie in the life style of the parents. If the maltreatment is abusive, then it may be that assuming the care of another's children, particularly in families

Table 8: A Comparison of Sample Data and Florida Tally Sheet Data: Alleged and Found Abuser and Reporter of Maltreatment

	Our Sample	Florida, Fiscal 1975-1976
Alleged Abuser	N=2839	N=35421
Mother	48.8%	52 %
Father	14.8	14
Both parents	20.7	20
Stepmother	1.2	1
Stepfather	5.5	3
Mother's boyfriend	1.5	2
Aunt	.6	1
Grandmother	1.2	1
Babysitter	.6	1 *
Other	4.4	- - *
No abuser	.7	- -
Missing	1.7%	
Abuser after Investigation	N=2690	
Mother	23.1%	NA
Father	8.0	
Both parents	9.6	
Stepmother	.7	
Stepfather	3.0	
Mother's boyfriend	.9	
Aunt	.4	
Grandmother	.6	
Babysitter	.4	
Other	13.6	
No abuser	39.7	
Missing	6.9%	
Reporter of Alleged Maltreatment	N=2805	N=35421
Medical personnel	8.9%	7%
Police	10.7	9
School personnel	9.2	8
Court/lawyer	1.3	1
Division of Youth Services	3.1	2 **
Clergy	0.2	- -
Social workers	8.4	7
Institutions	0.1	1
Relatives	23.6	24
Neighbors	21.4	25 **
Babysitter	0.7	- -
Anonymous	9.5	8
Other	2.9	8
Missing	2.9%	

*The Florida Tally Sheet data do not include these categories.

**Less than .01 percent.

likely to have financial and other problems, is a very stress-producing situation and may lead too often to child maltreatment.

The Reporter of Alleged Maltreatment

Our sample data on the reporter of alleged maltreatment is, again, quite similar to the data tallied by Florida officials. There is never more than four percentage points difference between our data and that of Florida.

The reporter of alleged abuse tends to fall into two major groups: professionals who are likely to come in contact with children in their work, and relatives and neighbors. Four groups of professionals are about equally likely to report alleged abuse (Table 8): those in the medical fields, the police, the schools, and social workers. The clergy and the courts (and attorneys) are quite unlikely to report alleged maltreatment.

Surprisingly, even the Division of Youth Services (DYS), a group which may well come to know the home situation of the children they serve, are unlikely to be the reporters of alleged maltreatment. Perhaps, the training of DYS workers leads them to see troubled children as the problem to be dealt with, and not, potentially, as maltreated children. Their perspective on the problem may lead them to see the child as the problem and to ignore the possibility that the child is the product of a more long-standing problem--maltreatment within the child's home environment. Still, it may be that indeed they do not tend to receive as their clients maltreated children.

Other major groups that report alleged maltreatment are relatives and neighbors. Relatives are the reporters of maltreatment in about 20 percent of the reported cases of maltreatment and neighbors and friends

are the reporters in an additional 20 percent (Table 8). Thus, 40 percent of the reported cases of maltreatment are reported by a relative, friend or neighbor of the alleged maltreated. With this large a percentage of "non-professional" reporters, it will be important for us to examine the validity of reports so received.

Protective Services Response to Alleged Maltreatment

Governmental intervention in family matters has been, for some time, an increasing phenomenon, but it is still a sensitive area (Kaduschin, 1974; Newberger and Bourne, 1978). The seriousness of child maltreatment demands some response and nearly all states now have some form of child maltreatment law and child protective services. In Florida, during the period covered by this study, protective services were organized on a county and regional level, but the existence of the central Abuse Registry probably encouraged a greater level of coordination in cases of reported child maltreatment than would otherwise have been the case.

A public campaign to foster reporting of child maltreatment and a hotline established to facilitate such reporting probably increased the chances of all types of treatment of children being reported to State officials as possible child maltreatment cases--both "true" abuse or neglect and behavior considered by some, but not necessarily the State, to be maltreatment. Indeed, nearly half of the reported cases of maltreatment were, on investigation, found to be invalid (Table 9).

Determining the validity of a case is not the only responsibility of the social workers serving the public interest. They must also establish a case plan (disposition) for the alleged maltreatment case:

Table 9: A Comparison of Sample Data and Florida Tally Sheet Data: Validity and Disposition

	Our Sample	Florida, Fiscal 1975-1976
Validity of Alleged Maltreatment	N=2531	N=17612
Valid	58.8%	53%
Invalid	41.2	47
Missing	12.4%	
Disposition of the Case	N=2852	N=17612
Case closed	36.3%	59%
Could not locate family	8.8	- - *
Limited services provided	12.1	27
Supervision provided	10.5	
Both supervision and services provided	5.0	
Services provided	4.1	
Foster care	2.2	3
Placed with a relative	5.6	3 *
Child removed from home	3.2	- -
Referred to another agency	5.0	6
Emergency shelter only	0.2	3 *
Client terminated services	1.4	- - *
Case is still pending	4.2	- -
Social worker unable to make a dispositon	0.7	- - *
Other	0.6	- -
Missing	1.3%	

*The Florida Tally Sheet data do not include these categories.

validity and disposition are not necessarily interdependent. Some cases are "closed" because the situation that led to the allegation of maltreatment was in the social worker's opinion a one-time incident. Others are closed as the social worker feels that although maltreatment technically did occur, there is no need for further services for the family. In some cases, services are provided that, in the social worker's judgement, remedy the abusive or neglectful situation and the case, though valid, is closed. And, in some cases it is the opinion of the social worker that no maltreatment occurred, or that it was of such a minor order that no services are necessary. Thus, a case may be valid or invalid, or "sufficiently invalid," and still be closed. More than a third of the 2,889 cases were closed (Table 9).

If a case is not closed, protective service workers appear to have three major alternatives: 1) they can provide supervision and/or services to the family and leave the child allegedly maltreated at home; 2) they can remove the child from the home (temporarily or more permanently); and, 3) they can leave the case open, pending further investigation.

In our data, more reported maltreatment cases are found valid than in the data tallied by Florida for fiscal 1975-76. The disposition of a case in our data varies widely from the case dispositions in the data tallied by Florida. Two factors may account for these differences, the largest difference occurring in the disposition category "closed."

First, the Florida tally sheet data was recorded for fiscal 1975-76 and it has been noted (Sussman and Cohen, 1975) that, at least in the early years of the Abuse Registry, many cases were not investigated (see also, Child Protection Report, 1975). They remained "open." Our data

covers this early period (1970 through 1974) and may therefore be accurately representing the full period (1970 through mid-1977): the percentage of "closed" cases in our sample may not be, in reality, as discrepant as it appears to be. Abuse personnel (personal communication) note that the percentage of valid cases has decreased in recent years, perhaps "causing" the discrepancy between our data and the Florida tally sheet data on validity.

Second, our coding of "disposition" was much more elaborate than the coding done by Florida officials. Some of our categories do not exist in the Florida data and some of these categories may have been considered "closed" by Florida officials. If, for example, "could not locate family," "referred to another agency," "client terminated services," "other," and "missing" were recorded, by Florida, as "closed," our sample data would show 53 percent of the reported cases "closed." This figure is much closer to the figure in the 1975-76 fiscal year tally sheet data recorded by Florida officials.

The view that appears to be prevalent in society today is that removing a child from his home is a most severe intervention on the part of government. Of our 2,889 cases, about ten percent of the children alleged as maltreated were removed from their homes. The largest percentage of these children were placed with another relative. These children, then, retained contact with some members of their families.

In some cases, it appears, social workers have no alternative. One percent of the cases are "client terminated" and in an additional nine percent of the cases the family moved before a determination of validity of maltreatment (or a reasonable disposition of the alleged case) could be made. Thus, social workers are "losing" nearly ten percent of the

families that may be abusing or neglecting their children: public intervention is precluded.

In summary, closing the case, removal of the child from the home, client termination and the inability to locate the family account for nearly 60 percent of the dispositions. In the remaining 40 percent of the cases services were provided.

"Limited services" refers to attempts by the social worker to "smooth out" the situation by warning the family of more drastic measures to be taken should the incident occur again, brief counseling during the investigation and referral (without follow-up) to other agencies that might be helpful (or return to an agency already involved). Ten percent of the cases are provided with limited services by protective service workers.

Among the less limited services that can be provided by social workers, supervision in the home is the most frequent and "services" (day care, visiting nurses, homemaking) the least frequent. In only about five percent of the alleged maltreatment cases are a full range of supervision and services provided to the child and his family in his home--the societally preferred alternative, it would appear. Of course, as over 40 percent of the cases are "invalid," the percentage of "valid" cases receiving such services is substantially higher.

In this preliminary analysis we have not yet taken into account the validity or the seriousness of the maltreatment charge. Our analysis is insufficient, at this point, to reach the conclusion that the proportion of valid cases is low or that the disposition of the cases is often inappropriate. As we have not controlled for validity or seriousness of maltreatment, we cannot judge protective service workers harshly. The

relative lack of reliance on the powers of protective service workers to alter the situation of the children reported for maltreatment is a complex issue. The "failure" of the system to use the resources for intervention available to them to advantage may well be a result of factors beyond their control (at present), factors which can only be revealed by more sophisticated analysis.

BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS AFFECTING REPORTED MALTREATMENT CASES

Basically, we have data on five characteristics of the children alleged as maltreated: a) sex; b) race; c) whether the child alleged as maltreated lives with both parents, one parent or neither parent; d) the number of children in the family of the child allegedly maltreated at the time of the alleged maltreatment; and, e) the age of the child allegedly maltreated at the time of the alleged incident. In the last section, we saw that both sexes were equally likely to be reported as maltreated, but also that alleged maltreatment cases were differentially distributed by race, family structure and the age of the child allegedly maltreated. In this section we examine the impact of these background characteristics on the type of maltreatment and the significant people involved in the reported maltreatment incident.

The Effects of Sex and Race on Reported Maltreatment

Almost without exception, sex appears unrelated to the type of maltreatment--alleged or actually found (Table 10). Neither boys nor girls appear more likely to be alleged to have been subjected to any particular type of maltreatment or to be found to have actually suffered a particular form. The one exception to this is that girls are more likely than are boys to be alleged to have been sexually abused, and are more likely to be found to have actually been sexually abused (but, few maltreatment cases are of this type).

Boys are no more likely than girls to be reported for maltreatment by any particular group, either a particular professional group or

Table 10: Background Effects on the Circumstances of Maltreatment: Sex and Race

	SEX		RACE	
	Male	Female	White	Black
Most Serious Alleged Maltreatment	N=1402	N=1442	N=2198	N=588
Sexual abuse	.2%	6.0%	3.0%	3.2%
Death	.1	0.0	--*	0.0
Injury, a result of beating	15.0	13.1	14.4	11.4
Beating, no obvious injury	18.0	16.2	18.1	13.8
Malnutrition	1.2	.9	.8	1.9
Medical neglect	11.3	7.4	8.0	13.9
Disorganized family life	25.0	26.4	25.9	25.0
Abandonment	2.6	3.2	2.1	5.6
Left unattended	11.3	9.8	11.3	9.0
Lack of food, shelter or clothing	9.1	9.6	9.9	8.0
School problems	1.5	1.2	1.3	1.5
No Abuse	.4	.2	.2	.5
Custody case	1.7	2.0	1.5	3.2
Other	2.6	4.0	3.3	2.9
Missing	1.6%		3.6%	
Most Serious Maltreatment Found by Social Worker	N=1347	N=1391	N=2114	N=567
Sexual abuse	.2%	3.2%	1.7%	2.1%
Death	.1	0.0	- -*	0.0
Injury, a result of beating	4.4	5.0	4.6	4.2
Beating, no obvious injury	6.0	5.6	6.0	5.1
Malnutrition	0.0	.4	.1	.5
Medical neglect	6.0	3.2	3.5	8.5
Disorganized family life	23.2	26.2	24.0	27.7
Abandonment	1.4	1.6	1.2	2.3
Left unattended	3.3	2.7	2.9	3.4
Lack of food, shelter, or clothering	1.3	1.2	1.4	.5
School problems	1.1	1.7	1.3	1.2
No abuse	30.7	29.7	31.5	26.6
Custody case	4.6	4.2	4.2	4.8
Family moved, not able to locate	9.5	6.6	9.0	5.5
Other	8.2	8.8	8.4	7.6
Missing	5.2%		7.2%	

*Less than .01 percent.

Table 10: Continued

	SEX		RACE	
	Male	Female	White	Black
Reporter	N=1368	N=1404	N=2144	N=573
Medical personnel	9.4%	8.6%	6.3%	17.8%
Police	10.3	11.2	10.6	11.5
School personnel	9.1	9.5	8.6	11.2
Court/lawyer	1.0	1.6	1.5	.7
Division of Youth Services	2.4	3.7	3.2	2.3
Clergy	.2	.2	.2	.2
Social Workers	8.0	8.7	7.1	12.2
Institutions	.1	.1	.1	0.0
Relatives	24.3	23.3	24.4	22.3
Neighbors	23.2	19.2	24.1	11.5
Babysitter	.4	1.0	.7	.9
Anonymous	9.6	9.0	10.4	5.9
Other	1.9	3.9	2.8	3.5
Missing	4.0%		6.0%	
Alleged Abuser	N=1407	N=1447	N=2206	N=589
Mother	48.4%	47.6%	44.9%	60.3%
Father	13.8	15.4	16.0	8.3
Both parents	22.7	17.9	23.1	10.9
Stepmother	1.0	1.4	1.2	1.2
Stepfather	4.6	6.2	5.9	3.4
Mother's boyfriend	1.5	1.5	1.3	1.7
Aunt	.6	.6	.4	1.4
Grandmother	1.0	1.4	.8	2.2
Babysitter	.6	.6	.6	.3
Other	5.1	6.6	5.1	9.0
No abuser	.8	.8	.6	1.4
Missing	1.2%		3.3%	
Abuser after Investigation	N=1407	N=1447	N=2206	N=589
Mother	21.0%	22.3%	19.4%	29.9%
Father	7.0	8.2	8.1	4.6
Both parents	10.4	7.7	10.0	5.6
Stepmother	.6	.8	.8	.5
Stepfather	2.0	3.6	3.2	1.4
Mother's boyfriend	1.1	.6	.7	1.0
Aunt	.3	.5	.3	.8
Grandmother	.4	.8	.3	1.2
Babysitter	.2	.6	.4	.3
Other	19.3	19.0	19.5	18.0
No abuser	37.8	36.1	37.3	36.7
Missing	1.2%		3.3%	

by relatives and neighbors. Contrary to other findings where boys have been found more often to be abused by their mothers (using data representative of society in general, not reported maltreatment cases, Gelles, 1978), we find that boys are no more likely than are girls to have been maltreated by their mothers, fathers, both parents, or any other persons. This is so whether we examine the alleged abuser or the abuser found after investigation by the social worker.

Race is for the most part unrelated to the type of maltreatment either alleged or found (Table 10). There is a slight tendency for Blacks to more often be alleged to be medically neglected and to be found so, but the differences are quite small.[14] There is also an interesting finding (a very slight difference) that Blacks are less likely than whites to be victims of alleged beatings. One might speculate that Blacks in American society do live in more violent settings than do whites, yet the evidence here is that this form of family violence is less common in Black families. Still, the most noteworthy finding is the lack of differentiating power that race has in predicting type of alleged or found maltreatment. Race is, essentially, unrelated to being reported for or found to be maltreated in our data.

As Blacks were slightly more likely to be alleged to be medically neglected, it is not surprising to find that they are also more likely to be reported by medical personnel than are whites (Table 10). Katz (1971) has suggested that the visibility of the poor subjects them to a greater likelihood of being reported as maltreated and that their

---

[14]As our sample size is quite large, tests of significance have been omitted. We feel that such tests would tend to lend uncalled for confidence in small differences and thereby be misleading.

necessary reliance on welfare services, including clinics, results in this increased visibility. Our data are consistent with this line of reasoning, but our data do not point to any reason why Blacks, more than whites, should bear this "visibility." On the other hand, Blacks are less likely than are whites to be reported by neighbors. Perhaps, Black families have learned to protect themselves from this possibly greater visibility by not reporting each other for behaviors that in a white neighborhood would not go unreported. There may be greater cultural approval in Black neighborhoods for acts others see as child maltreatment.

The caretaker(s) are most often the alleged abuser(s) and most often, in valid cases, the person(s) found to be the abuser(s) after investigation. They are considered responsible by most of society, and one might presume social workers as well, for the care of their offspring.

For Blacks, the mother is much more often the alleged and found abuser (Table 10). While female-headed households are generally over-represented in our data (Table 5), we have not yet established that Black families in our data are more often female-headed than are white families. In an earlier study of officially reported child maltreatment (Carr, Gelles, and Hargreaves, 1978), we found that 49 percent of the Blacks came from female-headed households, while only 30 percent of the white children did. Perhaps, Black families in Florida, too, are more likely than white families to be female-headed. Black women, then, would more often be the sole responsible caretaker and therefore more likely to be both the alleged and found abuser.

Our data, then, do not suggest that Black women are necessarily more likely to be alleged and found to maltreat their children. Our data

may reflect that Black women are more often the sole responsible caretaker in the family than are white women.

Still, the most important finding in Table 10 is that there are so few associations between sex, race and the circumstances surrounding the reported maltreatment incident. For the most part boys and girls, Blacks and whites, are equally likely to be reported for the various types of maltreatment at about the same rates. They are also likely to be found to have actually suffered such maltreatment at about the same rates. They are reported by the same types of people and have suffered the maltreatment at the hands of their various "significant others" at about the same rates.

The Effect of Family Structure on Reported Maltreatment

The absence of a parent has been shown to be related to child maltreatment (Carr, Gelles and Hargreaves, 1978) and to what might well be the result of child maltreatment--lack of achievement (Hunt and Hunt, 1975, 1977). Whether it is the absence of a proper role model, the lack of an additional member to carry some of the ordinary burdens of everyday living, or a reflection of some earlier severe crisis (with a lasting impact on the remaining caretaker), it appears to reflect a degree of stress. Family size has consistently been shown to be related to child maltreatment (Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz, 1979). Still, it is not clear whether a larger number of children is simply too great a strain on an already overburdened family, or whether there is something in the structure of large families that produces stress.

Children who live with both parents, and to some degree those few children who live only with their fathers, are more likely to be alleged

to have been beaten, and to be found (to a somewhat lesser degree) by the social worker to have been beaten (Table 11). This is consistent with other research we have conducted on reported child maltreatment (Carr, 1978). Children who live with both parents, or with their fathers alone, are more likely to be physically abused than are children who live with their mothers only.

Children who do live with only their mothers are more likely, twice as likely, to be left unattended. They are less likely to be beaten. Day care services, it appears, will not decrease the risk to children of physical harm, but they may lessen the isolation likely to be present in female-headed households.

Finally, children (most often girls, see Table 4) are more likely to be alleged to be sexually abused and to be found to have been sexually abused if they are living with either both parents or with their father alone. Not surprisingly, children who live with neither parent are much more likely to be alleged to have suffered from, and found to have suffered from, "disorganized family life" (partially, one would suppose, by definition).

Given that society has definite ideas about what is the "proper" family environment for child-rearing, it is not surprising to find that parental presence in the home is related to the relationship of the person reporting the alleged maltreatment to the child allegedly maltreated (Table 11). If a child lives with both parents, or with the mother only, the reporter is much more likely to be a neighbor. On the other hand, if the child lives in a "broken home" or with neither parent, the reporter is more likely to be a relative. It may well be

Table 11: Background Effects on the Circumstances of Maltreatment: Parental Presence and Number of Children in the Home

	PARENTAL PRESENCE				NUMBER OF CHILDREN			
	Both Parents Present	Mother Only	Father Only	Neither Parent Present	One	2-3	4-7	8 or more
Most Serious Alleged Maltreatment	N=1112	N=1248	N=204	N=315	N=1091	N=1077	N=417	N=27
Sexual abuse	3.7%	2.2%	5.9%	2.9%	2.7%	1.9%	4.1%	11.1%
Death	.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	.1	0.0	0.0
Injury, as a result of beating	20.0	11.0	11.3	6.3	15.1	13.9	10.6	11.1
Beating, no obvious injury	22.5	13.0	18.6	13.0	17.5	16.4	15.3	25.9
Malnutrition	1.3	1.1	0.0	.6	1.1	1.0	.2	0.0
Medical neglect	10.5	9.3	6.9	6.0	10.6	8.6	7.7	14.8
Disorganized family life	19.2	29.0	25.0	36.5	27.4	24.8	25.7	18.5
Abandonment	1.0	2.2	2.0	12.7	3.1	3.1	2.6	0.0
Left unattended	7.4	15.3	10.8	3.8	6.8	13.6	15.6	7.4
Lack of food, shelter or clothing	8.9	11.0	9.8	5.7	7.9	10.3	12.9	7.4
School problems	1.2	1.6	2.0	.6	1.6	.9	1.2	3.7
No abuse	.1	.4	0.0	.6	.2	.5	.2	0.0
Custody case	.3	1.2	4.9	7.9	2.7	1.7	.5	0.0
Other	4.0	2.8	2.9	3.2	3.3	3.2	3.4	0.0
Missing		.3%				9.6%		
Most Serious Maltreatment Found By Social Worker	N=1072	N=1201	N=198	N=301	N=1048	M=1040	N=403	N=26
Sexual abuse	2.0%	1.3%	2.0%	2.3%	1.2%	1.3%	2.2%	3.8%
Death	.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	.1	0.0	0.0
Injury, as a result of beating	6.6	3.9	3.5	1.3	4.6	4.8	4.0	3.8
Beating, no obvious injury	8.8	3.2	7.1	4.3	4.3	5.4	6.2	19.2
Malnutrition	.2	.2	0.0	0.0	.3	.2	0.0	0.0
Medical neglect	5.8	4.2	2.5	3.0	4.3	4.3	4.5	7.7
Disorganized family life	21.2	25.6	23.2	32.6	24.3	24.0	26.1	19.2
Abandonment	.6	.9	2.0	6.6	1.8	1.3	2.0	0.0
Left unattended	1.9	4.3	2.5	1.3	1.8	3.9	3.5	0.0
Lack of food, shelter or clothing	1.4	1.3	2.0	0.0	1.0	1.5	1.2	0.0
School problems	1.3	1.2	2.0	1.7	1.1	1.0	2.5	3.8
No abuse	31.3	32.6	22.7	21.6	30.9	31.6	30.3	23.1
Custody case	1.0	5.4	9.1	9.0	6.0	4.0	1.7	3.8
Family moved, not able to locate	8.5	8.4	6.8	9.6	9.6	8.8	6.5	3.8
Other	9.5	7.2	13.1	6.6	8.7	7.6	9.4	11.5
Missing		4.0%				12.9%		

*Less than .01 percent

Table 11: Continued

	PARENTAL PRESENCE				NUMBER OF CHILDREN			
	Both Parents Present	Mother Only	Father Only	Neither Parent Present	One	2-3	4-7	8 or more
Reporter	N=1086	N=1212	N=202	N=305	N=1071	N=1037	N=406	N=27
Medical personnel	10.1%	9.1%	6.4%	5.9%	11.0%	7.2%	6.7%	14.8%
Police	10.6	10.7	11.4	10.2	12.0	9.5	9.6	18.5
School personnel	11.7	7.5	8.9	7.9	8.4	7.3	11.8	22.2
Court/lawyer	.7	1.4	2.5	2.0	1.9	1.2	.5	0.0
Division of Youth Services	3.7	2.1	3.0	4.9	4.1	1.9	2.5	3.7
Clergy	.1	.2	.5	.3	.2	.4	0.0	0.0
Social workers	5.3	10.1	9.4	11.5	8.8	8.4	9.1	11.1
Institutions	.1	0.0	0.0	.7	.2	0.0	.2	0.0
Relatives	15.9	27.2	33.6	30.1	22.8	26.5	23.4	14.8
Neighbors	26.8	20.0	9.9	14.8	17.8	25.1	21.7	11.1
Babysitter	.9	.3	1.0	1.3	.5	1.3	.2	0.0
Anonymous	10.9	9.1	8.9	6.6	9.1	9.3	10.3	3.7
Other	3.1	2.2	4.5	3.9	3.4	2.1	3.9	0.0
Missing		2.9%				12.0%		
Alleged Abuser	N=1115	N=1251	N=206	N=317	N=1097	N=1079	N=418	N=27
Mother	20.8%	81.6%	10.2%	34.4%	47.1%	51.5%	48.3%	33.3%
Father	19.1	2.5	73.8	7.3	14.1	14.1	17.0	11.1
Both parents	46.1	1.6	2.9	15.1	19.9	19.4	23.0	25.9
Stepmother	1.4	.3	6.8	0.0	1.2	.9	1.4	3.7
Stepfather	7.8	4.6	1.5	2.2	5.0	5.1	4.8	11.1
Mother's boyfriend	0.0	3.2	.5	.3	1.2	2.0	.7	0.0
Aunt	.2	.1	0.0	4.4	.7	.6	.5	0.0
Grandmother	.1	.3	.5	9.1	1.8	.9	.5	0.0
Babysitter	.6	.6	.5	.9	.8	.5	.5	3.7
Other	3.5	4.6	3.4	23.0	7.3	4.3	2.4	11.1
No abuser	.4	.7	0.0	3.2	.8	.7	1.0	0.0
Missing		0.0%				9.3%		
Abuser after Investigation	N=1115	N=1251	N=206	N=317	N=1097	N=1079	N=418	N=27
Mother	9.4%	35.5%	5.3%	19.2%	19.1%	24.1%	23.2%	14.8%
Father	10.1	1.7	32.0	5.0	6.3	6.8	10.8	7.4
Both parents	19.7	1.1	2.4	6.3	8.7	7.6	11.2	11.1
Stepmother	.6	.2	5.3	0.0	.7	.5	1.0	3.7
Stepfather	4.4	2.1	1.0	.9	2.6	2.5	2.6	3.7
Mother's boyfriend	0.0	1.8	.5	0.0	.9	.7	1.0	0.0
Aunt	.2	.1	0.0	2.5	.3	.6	.5	0.0
Grandmother	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0	.9	.4	0.0	0.0
Babysitter	.3	.6	.5	.3	.2	.6	.5	3.7
Other	17.5	19.2	19.4	28.7	22.4	17.7	13.9	18.5
No abuser	37.8	37.9	33.5	31.9	37.9	38.6	35.4	37.8
Missing		0.0 %				9.3%		

that relatives, perceiving a greater stake in the welfare of the child, are more likely to report child maltreatment if the child is not living in the "ideal" family situation.

The relative reporting children as maltreated, in single-parent homes, may be the other parent. The absent parent may not approve of the child-rearing practices of the caretaker parent, or may even be using the Child Abuse Registry as a means of seeking custody of the child (custody cases appear to account for about five percent of the cases received, Table 6).

Children reported as maltreated by medical personnel are slightly more likely to be living with both parents, or the mother alone (Table 11). When children live with both parents, social workers are somewhat less likely to be the reporters of maltreatment. These slight differences may reflect the types of cases various professionals see, or perhaps, a perspective they bring to suspected maltreatment cases. At any rate, we will pursue these possible differences later in the analysis and attempt to ascertain if there is a difference in reporting patterns, or whether the differences seen are simply a matter of chance.

Parental presence in the home does, of course, affect who is named as alleged abuser. If a child lives with both parents, as 39 percent do, both parents are the alleged abusers nearly half the time. However, for the 43 percent of children who live with only their mothers, the mother is the alleged abuser over 80 percent of the time. If a child lives with his/her father, the father is the alleged abuser in over 70 percent of the cases.

If a child lives with both parents, then of course, we would expect that a good deal of the time only one parent would be suspected of,

or actually, maltreating the child. In 40 percent of the cases where the child lives with both parents only one parent is the alleged abuser--in 20 percent of the cases the mother is the alleged abuser and in 20 percent of the cases the father is the alleged abuser.

If a child lives with only one parent, then that parent is likely to be held responsible. Indeed, the other parent may not even be physically present to be accused. Yet, in Table 11 there is clear indication that one caretaker is likely to be singled-out and accused as the abuser, even if the child lives with both parents.

If a child lives with both parents, then about 20 percent of the time both parents are found, on investigation, to be the abusers. When children live in single-parent homes, the abuser on investigation is even more likely to be that single parent--over 30 percent of the time the found abuser is the mother if the child lives with her or the father if the child lives with him. The single-parent appears to run the risk of being found the abuser more often than do both parents in two-parent households.

In two-parent homes, if both parents are not found to be the abusers, it is equally likely that it will be the mother or the father that is the found abuser. The stepfather is also likely to be the found abuser in two-parent families. If the child lives with the father and the found abuser is not the father, it is likely to be either the mother or the stepmother. We noted earlier that stepparents are often found abusers (Table 8), and in Table 11 we see that remarriage appears to be disruptive whether or not the child actually lives with the stepparent.

Not surprisingly large families (although the number of large families in our sample is quite small) are likely to affect the

circumstances of alleged, reported child maltreatment. There is a tendency for beating to be the type of maltreatment alleged in families with eight or more children (Table 11). This tendency remains when type of maltreatment found by the social worker is examined. Sexual abuse is a type of maltreatment actually found more often in large families.

Single-child families, or very small families (perhaps, reflecting "new" or relatively young families that have yet to reach "completion") are somewhat more likely to have "custody conflict" as the alleged type of maltreatment, and to have the social worker find that the type of maltreatment is indeed a custody conflict, or to find that the family has moved and cannot be located.[15] In the single-child families, newly married and unsettled parents may very well, if they are young and immature, move a great deal, and there may well be a great deal of conflict among family members--both parents and other relatives--as to who can best care for the child.

The reporter of alleged maltreatment is likely to be a professional if the number of children in the family is large--eight or more (Table 11). Particularly, medical personnel, the police and the schools are likely to be the reporters of maltreatment. The visibility of large families to these groups, both because of their greater demand for services from specific welfare-oriented groups such as clinics and for their more general demand for services simply because they are large, may put them

---

[15]It should be noted that families of eight or more also appear relatively high in the percent where the found type of maltreatment is custody conflict--perhaps reflecting older children who have begun to make a choice as to which parent or relative they care to live with.

at greater risk of being reported by such professionals. However, medical personnel and the police are likely to be the reporters of abuse for single-child families, too. Here, we suspect, though we do not have the data to show it, that these families are young, immature families who have not yet learned their parenting roles well and therefore come more easily to the attention of these two professional groups.

Among children coming from large families there is also a tendency for the reporter to less often be a neighbor. In our New York study (Carr, Gelles and Hargreaves, 1978) we found Black families reported for child maltreatment were somewhat larger than white families reported. Family size, or race, may be relevant, then, to the finding (Table 10) that among Black children allegedly maltreated the reporter of maltreatment is unlikely to be a neighbor.

In large families the alleged abuser is less likely to be the mother than in smaller families, and this is also true for the abuser after investigation (Table 11). The stepfather is also likely to be the alleged abuser in large families. While the differences are quite small the abuser after investigation is the stepfather among very large families more often than in smaller families. It may be that in large, more "complete" families the chances of a stepparent being present are increased (a tendency that time constraints preclude us from checking) and there is a contingent increased risk that the stepparent will be alleged to abuse the children. Is there a bias on the part of society that a stepparent cannot really love and care for someone else's children, or does potential conflict resulting from merging two families increase the risk of child maltreatment?

The Effect of Age of the Child on Reported Maltreatment

Older children are more often reported as allegedly sexually abused and allegedly having school problems (Table 12). Additionally, older children are more often alleged to be the victims of "disorganized family life." These findings hold up, although not as strongly, when the maltreatment found by the social worker is considered.

Children under three are more likely to be alleged as medically neglected and lacking food, shelter and clothing--things older children may be in a better position to provide for themselves if necessary. These findings hold for the maltreatment found by the social worker after the investigation of the report (Table 12).

Finally, children under six are allegedly injured slightly more often than are older children, while older children are beaten without sustaining serious injury more often than are younger children. This finding holds when we examine the type of maltreatment found by the social worker after investigation. It appears that physical abuse may be common among both younger and older children, but that older children, being larger, may be less vulnerable to injury or may be better able to protect themselves from serious injury by fighting back or running. It seems likely that a great deal more physical abuse occurs to older children than we previously have acknowledged. Mulligan's (1977) study of violence against teenagers supports this notion. Physical abuse, regardless of injury or age of child, deserves our attention.

The reporters of maltreatment of children under three tend to be medical personnel and these are the children who are more likely to have been injured. Among older children the reporter is more likely to be a school official. Among children three to six years of age the

Table 12: Background Effects on the Circumstances of Maltreatment: Age of the Child Named on the Initial Allegation

	Under 3	3 through 6	Over 6
Most Serious Alleged Maltreatment	N=615	N=625	N=1540
Sexual abuse	.5%	1.9%	4.7%
Death	.2	0.0	0.0
Injury, as result of beating	17.7	17.8	11.2
Beating, no obvious injury	11.2	18.2	19.2
Malnutrition	3.7	.2	.3
Medical neglect	14.8	9.3	6.9
Disorganized family life	21.3	21.4	29.0
Abandonment	3.9	2.4	2.6
Left unattended	8.5	11.5	11.1
Lack of food, shelter, or clothing	13.2	12.0	6.9
School problems	0.0	.5	2.3
No abuse	.2	.3	.3
Custody case	2.0	1.8	1.8
Other	2.9	2.7	3.8
Missing		3.8%	
Most Serious Maltreatment found by the Social Worker	N=602	N=604	N=1474
Sexual abuse	.3%	.8%	2.8%
Death	0.0	.2	0.0
Injury, a result of beating	6.6	5.5	3.7
Beating, no obvious injury	1.0	4.8	8.1
Malnutrition	.7	.2	0.0
Medical neglect	6.8	3.6	4.0
Disorganized family life	19.1	19.0	29.4
Abandonment	2.0	1.5	1.2
Left unattended	2.7	3.0	3.1
Lack of food, shelter, or clothing	2.3	1.0	.9
School problems	0.0	0.0	2.4
No abuse	34.2	33.9	27.0
Custody case	5.6	6.0	3.2
Family moved, unable to locate	10.1	9.9	6.6
Other	8.5	10.6	7.6
Missing		9.3%	

Table 12: Continued

	Under 3	3 through 6	Over 6
Reporter	N=600	N=612	N=1505
Medical personnel	18.8%	8.0%	5.6%
Police	10.0	9.5	11.6
School personnel	1.0	6.4	14.0
Court/lawyer	1.7	1.0	1.3
Division of Youth Services	1.0	.5	4.9
Clergy	0.0	.5	.1
Social workers	10.0	8.3	7.9
Institutions	.2	0.0	.1
Relatives	26.2	26.5	21.4
Neighbors	19.0	25.8	20.2
Babysitter	1.2	1.5	.2
Anonymous	10.3	10.8	8.3
Other	.7	1.3	4.4
Missing		6.0%	

Table 12: Continued

	Under 3	3 through 6	Over 6
Alleged Abuser	N=618	N=625	N=1545
Mother	55.3%	55.0%	41.9%
Father	8.1	11.8	18.3
Both parents	25.9	19.7	18.2
Stepmother	0.0	.5	1.9
Stepfather	1.6	3.5	7.8
Mother's boyfriend	1.6	2.2	1.2
Aunt	.5	.2	.8
Grandmother	.8	.8	1.4
Babysitter	.8	1.1	.3
Other	4.5	4.6	7.2
No Abuser	.8	.5	1.0
Missing		3.5%	
Abuser after Investigation	N=618	N=625	N=1545
Mother	23.3%	24.2%	19.7%
Father	3.1	5.1	10.5
Both parents	11.3	6.6	9.1
Stepmother	0.0	.5	1.0
Stepfather	.5	.8	4.6
Mother's boyfriend	1.1	1.0	.6
Aunt	.2	.3	.5
Grandmother	.5	.2	.8
Babysitter	.5	.6	.2
Other	19.6	20.3	18.6
No abuser	40.0	40.5	34.4

reporter is slightly more likely to be a neighbor. This finding may reflect differing standards among neighbors about the degree of freedom to explore children in these age groups should have, or it might reflect neighborhood quarrels--a potential "misuse" of the Abuse Registry.

As older children are more often the victims of sexual abuse, one might expect concerned relatives to be frequent reporters, especially considering the societal taboo on sexual abuse. We did not find this. It may be that to report sexual abuse is as taboo as is the behavior itself, or perhaps (though we suspect this is unlikely) relatives do not know sexual abuse is occurring.

Mothers are more likely to be the alleged abuser of young children (Table 12). The mother is still more likely to be the abuser, among young children, after investigation, but the differences are much smaller than for alleged abuser. Fathers are likely to be both the alleged and the found abuser among older children. Among older children the step-father is also slightly more likely to be both the alleged and the found abuser.

Summary

Sex and race of the child are, for the most part, unrelated to the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident of maltreatment. However, family structure and the age of the child are associated with the type of maltreatment alleged and found by social workers after investigation; with the reporter of the alleged maltreatment; and, with the person(s) alleged and/or found to be the abuser.

Living with both parents, living in a large family and being either under three or over six tend to be associated with physical abuse.

Among older children the physical abuse tends not to produce an injury, while for younger children it does. Reporters are more often medical personnel among younger children. The abuser after investigation is likely to be the father among children under three and over six, but not children three to six.

Child "neglect" is more often found among younger children and among children living with just their mothers. It appears that often the reporter is a professional who may well come in contact with the family because the needed services were not earlier available to the family, thereby leading to neglect. Finally, neighbors are reporters of maltreatment less often among certain groups, particularly Blacks.

FACTORS AFFECTING THE VALIDITY OF AN ALLEGED MALTREATMENT CASE

We hypothesized that validity of child maltreatment reports might vary by sex, race and family composition of the child allegedly maltreated. Obviously, one would expect that the seriousness of the alleged maltreatment would affect the validity. We proposed that the reporter of maltreatment affects the likelihood of a valid finding in an alleged maltreatment case. And, who is labeled as abuser could affect the validity of the case.

The Effects of Background Factors on Case Validity

Boys allegedly maltreated are equally as likely as girls to have their cases found valid (Table 13). We thought girls might be more likely to have their cases found valid, perhaps reflecting the more protective attitude society may have toward girls.[16] This is not the case.

Blacks are more likely to have their cases found valid (Table 13). This should not be taken to indicate discrimination on the part of social service workers. We have already seen indications that Black families in this population may be quite different from white families. Blacks appear to suffer more medical neglect, and are more often reported by

---

[16]It is beyond the scope of the present analysis, but it would be interesting to see if this difference is constant across age categories. If indeed society's protective attitude is masked in this table, then among very young children where protection is equally "necessary" for both boys and girls, we would expect no difference and would expect older girls to have valid cases more often than older boys.

Table 13. Percent of Alleged Maltreatment Cases Found Valid by Background Factors: Sex and Race

	Percent Valid	N
Sex		
Male	58.9	1224
Female	58.9	1291
Race		
White	56.9	1922
Black	65.5	536

professionals, especially medical personnel whose power to persuade may be greater. The circumstances of alleged and found maltreatment appear different for Blacks, and as the Black children in our data are only slightly more likely to have their reported maltreatment cases found valid, a conclusion of discrimination is unwarranted.

While family structure (Table 11) was related to the circumstances of alleged maltreatment, there is little evidence that the family structure variables we have are related to an alleged maltreatment case being found valid. One might expect that if social workers believed single-parent families or large families were detrimental to the development of children (which they may believe), it might "color" their determination of the validity of the alleged maltreatment case. There is no evidence in Table 14 to support this notion. The presence of one or both parents and the number of children in a family appear unrelated to whether or not an alleged maltreatment case is found valid. In theory, of course, this is as it should be.

We proposed that those children perceived as most needing protection might be most likely to have the alleged type of maltreatment found valid. We might expect that younger children, who are least able to protect themselves might more often have their alleged cases found to be valid. We have no evidence to support this (Table 15). In fact, children over six years of age are the most likely to have an alleged maltreatment case found valid.[17]

---

[17]However, above we suggested the "protection" theme in conjunction with the sex of the alleged abused. Thus, further analysis is necessary before concluding that the age of a child at the time of an alleged maltreatment incident is not a factor in the decision to find a case valid. Seriousness of maltreatment should also be controlled.

Table 14. Percent of Alleged Maltreatment Cases Found Valid by Background Factors: Parental Presence and Number of Children

	Percent Valid	N
Parental Presence		
Both present	58.5	980
Mother only present	56.0	1100
Father only present	62.9	175
Neither parent present	68.5	276
Number of Children		
One	57.1	960
2 or 3	58.2	937
4 through 7	59.8	371
8 or more	58.3	24

Table 15. Percent of Alleged Maltreatment Cases Found Valid by Background Factors: Age of Child Allegedly Maltreated

Age	Percent Valid	N
Under 3	57.1	536
3 to 6	51.7	544
Under 7	54.4	1080
Over 6	62.9	1376

The Effect of Type of Maltreatment on Case Validity

An important distinction must be made: our measure of the behaviors the social workers found, on investigation, to have occurred and our measure of the social workers' determinations of the validity of a case were coded independently.[18]

For the most part, validity of maltreatment, as seen by the social worker, is not affected by the particular type of maltreatment alleged.[19] Physical abuse (including sexual abuse) and most types of what are commonly called "neglect" are found by the social worker to be "valid" about 60 percent of the time (Table 16).

However, if the alleged maltreatment is lack of food, shelter and/or clothing, the reported maltreatment is much less likely to be seen as valid by the social worker. It may be that social workers feel that a family that is not providing such necessities for their children can be readily helped and that the "neglect" is unintentional (invalid) in two senses: first, the family may not have known that services were available

---

[18]An alleged behavior may have actually occurred and still the case may be found invalid. It is quite possible for a social worker to have indicated on the report that a behavior we have included as maltreatment did occur, but decide that the circumstances surrounding the incident are mitigating and therefore the case is not a valid maltreatment case.

[19]Limits imposed by the small numbers of some types of maltreatment led us to choose to use the general categories of types of maltreatment used most frequently in the literature. Our collapsed categories do not agree precisely with other researcher's definitions. We have combined: 1) all types of physical abuse (including sexual abuse); 2) "omission" types of physical abuse such as malnutrition and medical neglect; and, 3) three types of "neglect." Unlike other researchers we have included two categories that are not necessarily forms of maltreatment as we often think of that term: 1) family custody conflicts over the child(ren); and, 2) cases where the family moved and the investigating social worker was unable to locate them in order to verify whether or not the case was a "true" report of maltreatment.

Table 16. Percent of Various Types of Alleged and Actual Maltreatment Cases Found Valid

	Percent Valid	N
Alleged Maltreatment		
Physical abuse	60.0	879
Malnutrition and medical neglect	58.1	258
Disorganized family life	61.2	658
Abandoned or left unattended	55.3	342
Lack of food, shelter or clothing	45.3	223
Custody conflict	73.5	49
Maltreatment Found by the Social Worker		
Physical abuse	94.1	337
Malnutrition and medical neglect	96.9	130
Disorganized family life	89.8	677
Abandoned or left unattended	96.7	122
Lack of food, shelter or clothing	97.1	35
No abuse	11.2	823
Custody conflict	58.5	118
Family moved, unable to locate	23.8	21

to them to provide these necessities of life; and second, the social worker may be able to readily provide these services to a family and having done so may consider the neglectful situation remedied and therefore invalid (at least no longer valid).

Reported maltreatment cases where the allegation of maltreatment actually appears to be a conflict over the custody of the child tend to be somewhat more often found valid by social workers. This may reflect that the "intake" social workers are attuned to distinguish a report that a family is in disagreement over who should or can best care for the child from "true" maltreatment cases. Yet, if such a situation does exist, or is alleged to exist, then a social worker may be more "ready" to assume that the child is "in the middle" and therefore is being maltreated, at least until such time as the family conflicts are resolved.[20]

It is clear that all forms of maltreatment, when they are found by the social worker to have taken place, are quite likely to be seen as "valid" maltreatment cases.[21] Physical abuse is most likely, when it is found on investigation to have occurred, to be considered a valid case

---

[20]This is far from a satisfactory explanation of the finding that reported child maltreatment cases that are alleged to be custody conflicts are quite likely to be found valid. Further analysis that controls for the perspective social workers bring to investigating a case would be useful.

[21]At times, a quite serious type of maltreatment (a form of physical abuse, medical neglect, etc.) actually occurs, but the social worker's report also makes it clear that the incident was unintentional, accidental, or the situation has since been remedied. We have coded such cases as "neglect"--a compromise between "falsely" inflating serious maltreatment and ignoring completely that the maltreatment did occur. In some cases, while the social worker's report may indicate that the alleged behavior (seen as potential maltreatment) did occur, the social worker does not see this as maltreatment. For example, a case where a child is seen as "improperly clothed" by a neighbor may result in a report stating that the child is not "well clothed," but that same report may explicitly state that "no abuse/neglect was evident." For the social worker's found type of maltreatment we have coded such cases as "no abuse/neglect."

(nearly all of the time), sexual abuse is the next most likely form to be considered valid and "neglect" is not far behind (about 90 percent of all cases). If a case is seen by the social worker, after investigation, to be essentially a custody conflict, then it is less likely to be considered a valid maltreatment case, although almost 60 percent of such cases are considered valid by social workers. It may be that social workers consider the effects of such battles over the "possession" of children harmful for the children involved.

As expected, if the social worker, on investigation, finds no evidence of the alleged maltreatment, then the case is unlikely to be found valid. Approximately 11 percent of the cases where no abuse is found by the social worker, though, are still considered valid. Without further analysis, we must presume that these cases are such that the case is open to protective services so that some action may be planned for the family, thereby necessitating a "technically" valid finding by the social worker. However, at the time of investigation the social worker is not willing to determine that maltreatment has actually occurred. The social worker may believe that maltreatment is a serious risk and therefore feel the case should be opened.

Further, for the cases where the social worker cannot locate the family, the case is likely to be found invalid. Hopefully, this is simply a way of leaving a case pending and a "convention" as to how to classify such a case. From an outsider's perspective it would seem that such cases demand a "validity cannot be determined" finding. However, reading the actual reports shows that often in these cases, the records are put in a special file so that they can be checked against new cases received to see if the family will, later, again show up in the Abuse Registry.

Finally, the social worker's finding that maltreatment has occurred is related strongly to our measure of validity of the maltreatment case. Between 89 and 97 percent of these cases are found valid. The remaining ten percent are somewhat surprising at first glance. but if these cases are perceived by the social worker as one-time incidents, where the alleged behavior did occur but is very unlikely to ever occur again, then it seems reasonable that a small percentage of the cases might very well be considered "invalid" maltreatment cases (even though technically maltreatment may have occurred).

The Effect of the Reporter on Case Validity

We suggested that reporters of maltreatment with "power" would be most likely to either report cases that were valid cases, or that a social worker would be more likely to see cases reported by such professionals as valid. It is clear that this is so for most professionals (Table 17). The Division of Youth Services, the police, medical personnel and school officials are the professional groups most likely to report maltreatment cases that are later determined valid. It is somewhat surprising that social workers are less likely to report cases that are later found valid by the protective services social workers. But, it may be that an agreement is reached among the various types of social workers (after first reporting a case to the Abuse Registry) about where and how the case will be handled. If the responsibility for the case is to be assumed by another agency, perhaps one already involved, it may merely be an internal phrasing that the case is invalid because protective services have not accepted the case. That is, when the reporter is a social worker, validity of the case may be more a reflection of the proper agency to

Table 17. Percent of All Reported Alleged Maltreatment Cases Found Valid by the Reporter of Maltreatment and the Alleged and Found Abuser

	Percent Valid	N
Reporter of Alleged Maltreatment		
Police	77.8	279
Division of Youth Services	81.6	76
Medical personnel	73.9	234
School personnel	71.9	235
Courts/lawyers	58.8	32
Social workers	64.9	202
Babysitters	58.8	17
Relatives	50.7	584
Neighbors	47.1	512
Anonymous	37.2	215
Alleged Abuser		
Mother	56.9	1210
Father	63.3	373
Both parents	54.3	505
Stepmother	58.1	31
Stepfather	70.5	139
Mother's boyfriend	46.2	39
Grandmother	66.7	33
No abuser	80.0	15
Abuser After Investigation		
Mother	89.8	609
Father	87.4	214
Both parents	87.9	257
Stepmother	73.7	19
Stepfather	94.9	78
Mother's boyfriend	78.3	23
No abuser	24.6	1042

take responsibility for the case than it is a reflection of the extent to which maltreatment did or did not occur. More analysis of this is, of course, in order.

Among non-professional reporters, the closer the relationship of the reporter to the child allegedly maltreated, the higher the proportion of reported cases found valid. When a relative is the reporter 50 percent of reported cases are found valid, just under 50 percent are found valid if the reporter is a neighbor, while less than 40 percent of the cases reported anonymously are found valid. Importantly, a case reported by any category of non-professional reporter is about 15 percent less likely to be found valid than is a case reported by a professional.

The Effect of the Relationship of the Abuser to the Abused on Case Validity

When an abuser, at the allegation stage of the case process, is the father, the case is likely to be found valid. When the alleged abuser is the stepfather, the case is most likely to be found valid. Surprisingly, if the alleged abuser is the mother's boyfriend, then the case is least likely to be found valid.

In four-fifths of the cases if there is an abuser after investigation, then the case is also considered valid. This is as we would, of course, expect. However, if the found abuser is the stepfather, the case is more likely than with other found abusers to be determined valid, and if the found abuser is the stepmother then the case is less likely to be seen as a valid maltreatment case. There appears to be a bias toward valid findings for stepfathers, perhaps even men in general.

If, after the social worker has investigated the case, there is no abuser, one would think that the case would have to be found invalid. Yet, nearly a quarter of such cases are found valid. It seems clear that there is room in the complexity of human conditions for cases of maltreatment to occur where the abuser is unknown or where it is impossible to assign "blame." Cases with no abuser after investigation can be found valid. They may be a special kind of maltreatment situation and perhaps require additional analysis to see if special consideration of these cases would be useful for better disposition and case planning.

FACTORS AFFECTING THE DISPOSITION OF AN ALLEGED MALTREATMENT CASE

Once a social worker has investigated a reported case of maltreatment, discovered exactly which actions (or omission of actions) have taken place, determined the validity of the case, then a case plan or disposition must be developed. If there is no abuse or neglect evident, then most often, although not always, the case will be closed. A variety of alternative courses of action are available to social workers: they can remove the child from the home, they can provide supervision and services to the family, they can refer the family to another agency (perhaps for specialized treatment or counseling), or they can resort to other less frequently used dispositions.

We proposed that the background of a child or his/her family would affect the disposition of a maltreatment case. We particularly expected that family structure would affect case disposition. Parental presence in the home, family size and the age of the reported child might influence a social worker's decision to "dispose" of a case in one or another way.

Certainly, we expected the nature of the maltreatment found by the social worker to have taken place to affect the disposition of the case.[22] As the reporter of maltreatment has been shown to be associated with

---

[22]We have chosen to use this indicator of whether maltreatment occurred as it appears to us less biased than validity as determined by social workers. It is not imbued with the problem of our validity measure: use of the term validity as a "convention."

the validity of an alleged maltreatment case, we expect the reporter of maltreatment may affect the disposition of the case.

The Effects of Background Factors on Case Disposition

We find no evidence in our data that either sex or race have any notable effect on the disposition of an alleged maltreatment case (Table 18). Boys and girls, Blacks and whites, are about as likely to have their cases closed, have supervision and/or services provided and be removed from their homes. However, we have not controlled for the validity of the maltreatment charge in Table 18. This would not appear to be a problem in the case of the association between sex and disposition (in Table 13 we saw that boys and girls were equally likely to have an alleged maltreatment case found valid), but it could affect the results seen in Table 18 on the association between race and disposition: Blacks (Table 13) are somewhat more likely than are whites to have an alleged maltreatment case found to be valid. This may be reflected in Table 18 -- Blacks are less likely to have their cases closed, and more likely (slightly) to have the disposition of their cases "pending."

Our data show that family composition is, in a few notable instances, associated with case disposition. Children living with only their father are twice as likely as children living with both parents to be removed from their homes (Table 19). Children living with only their mother are about as likely as children living with both parents to be removed. Children who live with their father are likely to be placed with another relative, or merely removed from the home: they are not particularly likely to be placed in foster homes.

Table 18. Background Effects on Case Disposition: Sex and Race

	SEX		RACE	
	Male	Female	White	Black
Disposition of Case After Investigation	N=1390	N=1428	N=2178	N=582
Case closed	36.3%	36.6%	37.2%	33.5%
Could not locate family	10.1	6.4	9.3	5.7
Limited services provided	13.0	11.3	11.7	14.3
Supervision provided	10.8	10.4	10.2	12.0
Both supervision and services provided	5.3	4.8	5.0	5.0
Services provided	3.8	4.5	3.8	5.2
Foster care	1.8	2.7	2.0	3.1
Child placed with a relative	5.3	6.1	5.5	6.5
Child removed from the home	3.1	3.3	3.6	1.5
Referred to another agency	3.8	6.2	4.8	5.8
Emergency shelter only	.1	.4	.2	.3
Client terminated services	1.1	1.8	1.5	.9
Case is still pending	3.7	4.8	3.9	5.3
Social worker was unable to make a disposition	1.0	.4	.8	.2
Other	.8	.5	.6	.5
Summary:				
Closed	36.3%	36.6%	37.2%	33.5%
Supervision and/or services	32.9	31.0	30.7	36.5
Child removed	10.2	12.1	11.1	11.1
Case referred	3.8	6.2	4.8	5.8

Table 19. Background Affects on Case Dispositon: Parental Presence, Number of Children and Age

	PARENTAL PRESENCE			
	Both Present	Mother Only	Father Only	Neither Present
Disposition of Case After Investigation	N=1100	N=1237	N=204	N=238
Case closed	37.6%	38.3%	31.9%	25.2%
Could not locate family	9.7	8.6	6.4	5.0
Limited services provided	11.4	12.9	12.3	12.6
Supervision provided	10.2	11.8	10.8	7.6
Both supervision and services provided	6.5	4.4	3.4	2.9
Services provided	5.1	4.0	2.0	1.7
Foster care	1.6	1.6	2.0	7.1
Child placed with a relative	3.3	5.6	9.8	12.6
Child removed from the home	3.3	2.3	4.9	6.3
Referred to another agency	5.2	5.0	3.4	4.2
Emergency shelter only	.3	.2	1.0	0.0
Client terminated services	1.5	.7	2.5	2.9
Case is still pending	2.7	3.9	5.9	10.9
Social unable to make a disposition	.9	.2	2.9	.4
Other	.7	.6	1.0	.4
Summary:				
Closed	37.6%	38.3%	31.9%	25.2%
Supervision and/or services	33.2	33.1	28.5	24.8
Child removed	8.2	9.5	16.7	26.0
Case referred	5.2	5.0	3.4	4.2

Table 19: Continued

	NUMBER OF CHILDREN			
	One	2-3	4-7	8 or more
Dispositon of Case After Investigation	N=1081	N=1068	N=413	N=27
Case closed	35.5%	37.5%	36.1%	40.7%
Could not locate family	9.2	9.2	8.2	3.7
Limited services provided	12.7	12.0	8.7	11.1
Supervision provided	9.5	9.2	16.0	11.1
Both supervision and services provided	4.0	5.4	5.1	11.1
Services provided	3.7	3.5	6.8	0.0
Foster care	3.1	1.9	1.0	0.0
Child placed with a relative	5.6	6.0	5.1	3.7
Child removed from the home	3.4	3.7	1.5	0.0
Referred to another agency	5.5	4.3	5.6	11.1
Emergency shelter only	.4	.2	0.0	0.0
Client terminated services	1.9	1.2	.5	0.0
Case is still pending	4.5	4.5	3.4	3.7
Social unable to make a dispositon	.4	.7	1.5	3.7
Other	.6	.7	.7	0.0
Summary:				
Closed	35.5%	37.5%	36.1%	40.7%
Supervision and/or services	29.9	30.1	36.6	33.3
Child removed	12.1	11.6	7.6	3.7
Case referred	5.5	4.3	5.6	11.1

Table 19: Continued

	AGE OF CHILD ALLEGEDLY MALTREATED		
	Under Three	Three to Six	Over Six
Disposition of Case After Investigation	N=611	N=621	N=1523
Case closed	37.6%	38.8%	34.9%
Could not locate family	10.6	10.1	6.8
Limited services provided	9.8	13.2	12.6
Supervision provided	9.8	10.6	10.4
Both supervision and services provided	3.6	4.2	6.0
Services provided	3.6	4.0	4.6
Foster care	4.1	1.8	1.6
Child placed with a relative	5.6	3.5	6.5
Child removed from the home	2.5	2.7	3.8
Referred to another agency	6.1	4.2	5.2
Emergency shelter only	.3	0.0	.3
Client terminated services	1.3	1.1	1.6
Case is still pending	3.9	4.8	4.0
Social worker was unable to make a dispositon	.5	.5	.8
Other	.5	.3	.9
Summary:			
Closed	37.6%	38.8%	34.9%
Supervision and/or services	26.8	32.0	33.6
Child removed	12.2	8.0	11.9
Case referred	6.1	4.2	5.2

Children reported as maltreated and coming from large families are likely to have their cases closed (Table 19), yet such children are not more likely to have their alleged cases found invalid (Table 14). Social workers do not appear to have difficulty leaving children who live in large families, while they do if a child comes from a smaller family. Removal of a child from larger families is rare, and if it does occur the child is placed with a relative. Children from these very large families are more likely to be referred, for help, to another agency. It is the only child who is most likely to be removed from his home, and this removal is, more often than for other children, a removal to a foster home--a more permanent removal.

Young children reported as maltreated are often not located by the investigating social worker (Table 19). Perhaps, the relative lack of contact with the community, especially through school attendance, makes these children particularly difficult to locate. A caretaker with one (or even two) very young children also can more easily be very mobile geographically. That these young children are more often the victims of physical injury (Table 12) suggests the need for protective service workers to develop ways to increase their ability to locate the families of young children reported as maltreated.

Children under three and children over six reported for maltreatment are likely to be removed from their homes. However, young children are more likely to be placed in foster homes or with a relative, while for older children the predominant placement is with a relative. Foster homes may well be less willing to accept older children.[23]

---

[23]Here it will be important to examine this relationship controlling for the seriousness of maltreatment. If older children are being subjected to maltreatment serious enough to warrant removal from their home, then the apparent difficulty of placing older children is a problem meriting intense and immediate attention.

The Effect of the Reporter on Case Disposition

The reporter of maltreatment cases is strongly related to the disposition of the case. A maltreatment case reported by a non-professional--a relative, a neighbor, a babysitter or anonymously--is much more likely to be closed than a case reported by a professional (Table 20). Almost half the cases reported by non-professionals are closed. We have already shown that only half of the cases reported by relatives and less than half the cases reported by neighbors or anonymously are found to be valid (Table 17). To some degree, this is further evidence that encouraging non-professionals to report suspected instances of child maltreatment may only increase the number of cases reported, not the number of "true" maltreatment incidents uncovered. Further analysis, especially controlling for the seriousness of the reported maltreatment, is indicated as the policy implications for public awareness campaigns and effective manpower usage are important.

When professionals report child maltreatment cases, the case is quite unlikely to be closed. Some form of supervision and/or services are provided in between 35 and 45 percent of the cases reported by professionals (see summary portion of Table 20). Closer examination of Table 20 shows that limited services are quite common in cases reported by medical personnel, the police and the schools. This suggests that the Protective Services will investigate the case, provide limited counseling and/or warning to the family involved, and then return (when necessary) the case to another agency involved. That a disposition of "referral" is quite high among these reporters of maltreatment lends support to this.

Table 20: The Effect of Reporter of Maltreatment of Case Disposition

REPORTER

	Medical Personnel	Police	School	Court	DYS*	Social Workers	Relatives	Neighbors	Babysitter	Anonymous
Disposition of Case After Investigation	N=250	N=293	N=254	N=36	N=85	N=233	N=659	N=589	N=20	N=259
Case closed	23.2%	22.9%	31.5%	27.8%	15.3%	26.6%	41.4%	46.3%	45.0%	49.0%
Could not locate family	4.8	4.1	4.3	2.8	5.9	10.3	7.9	11.7	15.0	14.7
Limited services provided	13.2	15.0	16.1	8.3	12.9	12.9	11.4	10.7	15.0	8.9
Supervision provided	15.2	13.0	12.6	22.2	11.8	11.2	7.0	9.2	5.0	11.2
Both supervision and services provided	8.0	3.8	8.7	5.6	9.4	5.6	3.6	4.1	0.0	5.0
Services provided	8.0	4.4	7.9	2.8	4.7	4.3	3.5	2.7	0.0	2.7
Foster care	4.4	3.1	3.1	0.0	5.9	2.6	1.4	1.5	0.0	.8
Child placed with a relative	4.8	10.9	2.8	13.9	4.7	6.9	9.0	2.9	0.0	.8
Child removed from the home	4.8	6.5	2.4	5.6	12.9	3.4	2.0	2.2	5.0	0.0
Referred to another agency	6.0	7.8	4.7	2.8	3.5	9.0	4.2	3.6	5.0	3.1
Emergency shelter only	0.0	1.4	0.0	2.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Client terminated services	1.2	.7	.8	2.8	1.2	1.3	2.4	1.4	0.0	.4
Case is still pending	4.8	4.8	3.1	2.8	8.2	4.7	4.7	2.9	10.0	1.9
Social worker was unable to make a a dispositon	.4	0.0	1.6	0.0	0.0	.9	1.1	.3	0.0	1.5
Other	.8	1.7	.4	0.0	3.5	.4	.5	.5	0.0	0.0
Summary:										
Closed	23.2%	22.9%	31.5%	27.8%	15.3%	26.6%	41.4%	46.3%	45.0%	49.0%
Supervision and/or services	44.4	36.2	45.3	38.9	38.8	34.0	25.5	26.7	20.0	27.8
Child removed	14.0	20.5	8.3	19.5	23.5	12.9	12.4	6.6	5.0	1.6
Case referred	6.0	7.8	4.7	2.8	3.5	9.0	4.2	3.6	5.0	3.1

*The Division of Youth Services

If the professional involved in reporting child maltreatment is connected directly with the legal system, then it is quite likely that the child will be removed from his or her home. Twenty percent or more of children reported as maltreated by the police, the courts and the Division of Youth Services are removed from their homes. The patterns of removal of the child from his/her home also differ in these three reporting groups: foster care and especially "child removed from home" (presumably to an institution, pending more permanent placement) is more common if the reporter is the Division of Youth Services. Placement with a relative is more common if the maltreatment was reported by the courts, suggesting a "keep the family together" propensity in cases with family court involvement. Also, courts may see more cases of very young children, children they hope to be able to keep out the cycle of foster-home-after-foster-home way of protecting children. With older children, those likely to be reported by the Division of Youth Services, placement with relatives may be more difficult--fewer relatives may be willing to take on the responsibility of an older child who comes to them with an apparent set of "problems." The police, it seems likely, encounter a broader spectrum of maltreatment cases in their work. It does not seem unusual that they are likely to report cases that fall between the courts and the Division of Youth Services in terms of foster care (a relatively permanent placement) and placement with a relative.

Among non-professionals reporting child maltreatment, relatives are more likely than others to report cases which later result in the child being removed from the home, and most frequently such children are placed with a relative. Neighbors and anonymous reporters, unlike relatives, tend to report cases that do not result in the child being

removed from his/her home.[24] Distance from the actual family situation, non-professional status leading to unclear ideas on what behaviors will "officially" be treated as child maltreatment, or possibly a skepticism on the part of protective service workers if a case is reported by a non-professional, "disinterested" party may contribute to this association. At any rate, this finding raises an important policy-related issue for further analysis to address.

The Effects of the Type of Maltreatment on Case Disposition

Table 21 presents the dispositions of maltreatment cases where the social worker, after investigation, found that maltreatment actually occurred. Few of these cases are closed, unless the social worker determined that no abuse occurred, or a case appears to be a custody conflict. That a few are closed suggests that some cases of child maltreatment will not be officially recorded as such. Cases which appear to a social worker to be under control and to need no further social services are likely to be closed.

If the maltreatment is sexual abuse, medical neglect, abandonment or lack of food, shelter and clothing, some action is taken in between 87 and 97 percent of the cases. Most would agree that the first three types constitute serious maltreatment (even "abuse") of the children involved and the situation demands action on the part of protective service workers. Lack of food, shelter and clothing may be more a

---

[24] Again, it is important to note that seriousness and the validity of the maltreatment case have not been controlled.

Table 21: The Effect of the Type of Maltreatment Found by the Investigating Social Worker on Case Disposition

TYPE OF MALTREATMENT FOUND BY SOCIAL WORKER

Disposition of Case After Investigation	Sexual Abuse N=48	Beating with Injury N=128	Beating no Injury N=159	Medical Neglect N=126	DFL* N=678	Abandonment N=40	Left Unattended N=81	Lack FSC* N=35	School Problem N=38	No Abuse N=836	Custody Conflict N=121	Family Moved N=236
Case closed	12.5%	22.7%	21.4%	7.9%	21.2%	5.0%	17.3%	2.9%	21.1%	78.3%	43.0%	1.3%
Could not locate family	2.1	2.3	0.0	1.6	.4	2.5	3.7	2.9	2.6	.8	0.0	92.8
Limited services provided	14.6	10.2	16.4	11.9	18.7	15.0	22.2	11.4	21.1	8.7	14.9	.4
Supervision provided	8.3	18.8	13.8	17.5	12.8	7.5	19.8	17.1	31.6	4.8	5.8	0.0
Both supervision and services provided	18.8	8.6	10.1	20.6	6.0	5.0	9.9	17.1	10.5	.1	2.5	0.0
Services provided	2.1	6.3	8.8	10.3	5.6	7.5	3.7	14.3	0.0	1.4	.8	0.0
Foster care	4.2	5.5	2.5	.8	3.5	22.5	3.7	8.6	0.0	.1	0.0	0.0
Child placed with a relative	10.4	7.8	6.9	6.3	10.3	15.0	6.2	11.4	0.0	.4	14.0	1.3
Child removed from the home	6.3	6.3	6.3	4.8	6.5	5.0	4.9	2.9	0.0	.1	0.0	0.0
Referred to another agency	16.7	3.1	5.7	11.1	7.7	2.5	1.2	5.7	2.6	2.6	4.1	1.7
Emergency shelter only	0.0	0.0	.6	0.0	.4	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	.1	0.0	0.0
Client terminated services	0.0	1.6	.6	0.0	1.5	0.0	1.2	0.0	2.6	.6	3.3	.4
Case is still pending	4.2	7.0	5.7	5.6	4.0	10.0	4.9	5.7	5.3	1.4	11.6	.8
Social worker was unable to make a disposition	0.0	0.0	.6	0.0	.3	2.5	0.0	0.0	2.6	.1	0.0	.8
Other	0.0	0.0	.6	1.6	.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	.2	0.0	.4
Summary:												
Closed	12.5%	22.7%	21.4%	7.9%	21.2%	5.0%	17.3%	2.9%	21.1%	78.3%	43.0%	1.3%
Supervision and/or services	43.8	43.9	49.1	60.3	43.1	35.0	55.6	59.9	63.2	15.0	24.0	.4
Child removed	20.9	19.6	15.7	11.9	20.3	42.5	14.8	22.9	0.0	.6	14.0	1.3
Case referred	16.7	3.1	5.7	11.1	7.7	2.5	1.2	5.7	2.6	2.6	4.1	1.7

*DFL refers to "disorganized family life" and Lack FSC to "Lack of food, shelter and/or clothing."

95

"life style" matter, and seems in some ways less serious.[25] It may be that the low level of "closed" cases merely reflects that social service workers do have at their disposal the means, readily, to do something about this type of child maltreatment.

In contrast, cases where beating is found to have occurred (including cases with injury resulting) are much more likely to be closed. This may reflect a lack of resources for social service workers to keep such a case "open" to do anything even if they can keep the case open (for example, effective individual therapy is available only to limited numbers). Social workers can hardly move in and "live with" a family thought to be a high risk family for child maltreatment. A parent or caretaker who says "it will never happen again" has, due to our notions about parental rights, all the tools at his/her disposal to prevent intervention, at this early stage, by protective service workers. Still, it appears that protective service workers do intervene where danger is clear. Twenty percent of the children sustaining injury are removed from the home while 15 percent of the children suffering beating without injury are removed.

Despite cases of apparently serious maltreatment of children where the case is closed, seriousness is strongly related to intervention. Over 40 percent of abandoned children are placed outside their homes; 20 percent of children who are sexually abused, beaten to a point of sustaining injury, or who lack food, shelter and/or clothing are removed from their homes. Twenty percent of children suffering from "disorganized

---

[25]Note, we have a category, malnutrition, that covers severe deprivation in one of these essentials of life.

family life" are also placed outside their homes. Fifteen percent of children who are physically abused (beaten without sustaining visible injury) are removed from their homes. It would appear that many children are physically abused, but lack of physical evidence may hamper social service workers efforts to help. That at least one incident of beating has occurred may not provide strong enough evidence to allow social workers to intervene and the child may be returned to a potentially abusive situation. A serious analysis of "recidivism" of alleged mal-treatment should help ascertain which cases, where it appears that social workers can do little more than offer supervision and services, are likely to result in repeated abuse. Such an analysis could provide the impetus for well-planned measures to give protective service workers more power to protect children, while safe-guarding the rights of parents.

RECIDIVISM OF REPORTED MALTREATMENT CASES

Our analysis of recidivism of maltreatment is necessarily limited: the scope of our project, time and money constraints prevent us from fully exploring information about recidivism available in our data. We have operationally defined recidivism in three ways: 1) "any" recidivism has occurred if there are any allegations of maltreatment subsequent to the first reported; 2) "severe" recidivism has occurred if a subsequent allegation is as "serious" or more "serious" than the maltreatment first reported; and, 3) "less severe" recidivism has occurred if a subsequent allegation is less "serious" than the maltreatment first reported. We were only able to fully code information on the first allegation-investigation reports for each child, thus we do not have full information on the validity of subsequent allegations.[26]

Recidivism, then, refers to recidivism of reported, alleged child maltreatment. This measure is dependent on the assumption that a fair proportion of the second and subsequent allegations are valid (almost 60 percent of the initial allegations of child maltreatment are valid--see Table 9). Compensating, somewhat, for this assumption, is that some repeated child maltreatment is likely to occur and not be reported, lending a conservative factor to our estimates derived from our sample data.

---

[26]We did code whether at least one subsequent allegation was valid.

Our measure of recidivism is also problematic in another way. It was possible to count the number of allegations of maltreatment after the first (almost all allegation reports were dated, see Table 1). However, determining if the type of maltreatment alleged was more (or equally) severe, or was less severe, than the first is a much more arbitrary coding procedure (see Appendix B for instructions for coding these variables).

Twenty percent of our sample show recidivism of reported, alleged maltreatment. It is difficult to determine if that rate of recidivism is high, moderate, or perhaps, even low. Recidivism of juvenile delinquency is often between 60 and 80 percent (Hirschi and Selvin, 1967), but this may not be comparable to child maltreatment. Herrenkohl (1977) has researched recidivism of child abuse, but his data base differs: he uses families cited for "abuse," in two counties in Pennsylvania. He finds 19 percent of his sample with validated citations have one or more validated citations after the first. Yet, other measures of recidivism Herrenkohl developed show rates as high as 53 percent.

We cannot establish the "true" rate of recidivism of child maltreatment in Florida. We can examine factors that are associated with recidivism as we have defined it.

The Effects of Background Factors on Recidivism

Peoples of differing backgrounds and cultural groups often have different child-rearing practices. We proposed that background characteristics might affect what is deemed to be child maltreatment, both by the responsible caretaker and by representatives of the official system for child protection. To the extent that groups of people differ in their

standards for child-rearing; they may well be at greater risk of being repeatedly reported for and found to be child abusers.

With our data, we can look at the differences in rates of recidivism of reported, alleged child maltreatment for sex and race. Some groups may raise boys and girls quite differently, perhaps believing the use of physical punishment is necessary to the proper development of boys (Straus, 1971). Such child rearing practices may be viewed by at least some social workers as behavior that constitutes child maltreatment. Different racial groups, similarly, may run the risk of being repeatedly reported for child maltreatment for these reasons.

Table 22 presents rates of recidivism for boys and girls, and for the racial groups in our sample.[27] If boys are expected to bear up under harsher punishment in order for them to develop into "men," then we might expect them to be repeatedly reported for maltreatment more often than girls. Boys are no more likely to be repeatedly reported as allegedly maltreated. Not only are boys and girls equally likely to be reported for at least one subsequent allegation of maltreatment, they are also equally likely to have that subsequent allegation deemed a harsher charge and to have the subsequent allegation be a less severe charge of maltreatment.

The reputed violence of the Black community (undoubtedly grossly exaggerated) might lead one to expect that harsh punishment of children bordering on child maltreatment might be more common among Blacks, and perhaps, other minorities as well. And, the minority status of Blacks

---

[27]There are a few orientals and a few unspecified "other" racial groups represented in our sample, but there are too few to make a meaningful comparison. Only racial groups with an N of 20 or more were included.

Table 22: Recidivism: Percent with at Least One Subsequent Allegation of Maltreatment by Sex and Race

	N	Percent with any Subsequent Allegation of Maltreatment	Percent with a More Severe Subsequent Allegation of Maltreatment	Percent with a Less Severe Subsequent Allegation of Maltreatment
Sex				
Males	1404	21.2%	17.5%	5.4%
Females	1446	20.4	17.4	4.8
Race				
White	2204	20.9%	17.5%	5.3%
Black	589	19.7	16.8	4.1
Latin American	30	30.0	23.3	10.0

might put them at greater risk of being seen by official system representatives as more likely to mistreat their children. We have no evidence that Blacks have higher rates of recidivism. As with whites, about one-fifth of Blacks in our sample are reported, after an initial allegation of maltreatment, for a subsequent charge of maltreatment. Further, Blacks are not more likely than are whites to have any subsequent allegation of reported maltreatment be a more severe charge. Although there are few children of Latin American heritage in our sample, there does appear to be some evidence that they <u>are</u> more likely than the other racial/cultural groups in our sample to be reported more than once for child maltreatment.[28]

We find no evidence that sex and race affect the rates of recidivism of reported, alleged child maltreatment. More analysis with a more satisfactory measure of recidivism is indicated, hopefully an analysis that will also use a better indicator of "race."

One might expect that the presence of both parents and the supervision, support and stability they could represent might reduce recidivism of child maltreatment. One might also expect that "unusual" family situations would increase the risk of being repeatedly reported as a

---

[28]The number of children in our sample who are coded as of Latin American descent may be artificially low. We coded "race" exactly as it appeared on the Florida reports and although we saw many names that could very well have reflected Latin heritage, unless the social worker recording the information explicitly stated the child was Puerto Rican, Latin American, etc., we coded the child as being white. This, of course, may mean that "whites" in our sample consist of an unknown number of children of this racial/cultural background. If this is so, the evidence in Table 22 that Latin American children may be more often reported repeatedly for child maltreatment may also mean that the rate of "recidivism" for whites is inflated. However, there appears to be no reasonable way to estimate the degree of bias that might exist.

maltreated child. Those reporting child maltreatment might be more inclined to view children in "unusual" home environments as, by that fact itself, subject to maltreatment. The finding that large families are more often the locus of reported child maltreatment leads us to expect that we would find a direct relationship between number of children in a family and recidivism of maltreatment. Finally, we might expect that older children who are once reported as maltreated might be more likely to be again reported: they may be more "set" in the situations they find themselves in and their families may be less receptive to changes necessary to prevent further child maltreatment.

Table 22: Recidivism: Percent with at Least One Subsequent Allegation of Maltreatment by Sex and Race

	N	Percent with any Subsequent Allegation of Maltreatment	Percent with a More Severe Subsequent Allegation of Maltreatment	Percent with a Less Severe Subsequent Allegation of Maltreatment
Sex				
Males	1404	21.2%	17.5%	5.4%
Females	1446	20.4	17.4	4.8
Race				
White	2204	20.8%	17.5%	5.2%
Black	589	19.7	16.8	4.1
Latin American	30	30.0	23.3	10.0

Children living with both parents, or with only their mothers, are equally likely to be repeatedly reported as maltreated (Table 23). The rate of recidivism is slightly higher if the child lives with the father alone. Only if the child lives with neither parent is the rate of recidivism reduced.

There appears to be a reluctance to, by force, remove children from their natural parents. Yet, recidivism of reported maltreatment is lowest among children living with neither parent. Removal of the child from his home appears to be a "successful" intervention. We have not explored three important dimensions of this type of intervention: 1) whether the child was removed by choice or by governmental intervention; 2) whether the child was placed with a relative, in foster care or in an institution; and, 3) the seriousness of maltreatment originally found among children who live with neither parent. Knowledge of the effects of these dimensions on recidivism would help us understand how to remove a child from an abusive situation in a way that is most helpful to the family and the child being maltreated.

The larger the number of children in a family, the greater the likelihood of recidivism (Table 23). Only about 15 percent of single-child families are, after initial contact with the officials for child maltreatment, again in contact with officials for child maltreatment. It would appear that intervention[29] in single-child families is somewhat successful in reducing recidivism of reported child maltreatment (although, of course, a much more controlled analysis is needed for such a conclusion). In contrast, nearly a third of families with four to seven children, and more than two-fifths of the children living in families with eight or more children are reported as allegedly maltreated more than once.

Two findings, presented earlier, suggest some of the mechanisms that may be at work. First, very young children are, more often than older children, reported for physical abuse where an injury is sustained or for serious medical neglect (Table 12). More "extreme" intervention may occur more often in these cases (this is to some degree suggested in Table 21, although we did not control for age in Table 21).[30] Still, the differences in the "severity" of intervention (disposition) is not that great for different kinds of child maltreatment (Table 21). Second, older children may be more able to muster the resources to draw attention to their plight (even official attention) either by directly asking

---

[29]Contact with the Abuse Registry in and of itself is <u>one</u> form of intervention.

[30]The relationship between family size and age of the child allegedly maltreated has been a recurring problem in our research. We have assumed single-child families more often have younger children while in larger families the child reported as maltreated is more often older.

Table 23: Recidivism: Percent with at least One Subsequent Allegation of Maltreatment by Parental Presence, Number of Children and Age

	N	Percent with any Subsequent Allegation of Maltreatment	Percent with a More Severe Subsequent Allegation of Maltreatment	Percent with a Less Severe Subsequent Allegation of Maltreatment
Parental Presence				
Both present	1116	21.3%	17.1%	5.2%
Mother only	1253	21.0	17.9	5.3
Father only	206	24.8	22.9	5.4
Neither present	240	14.2	11.3	4.6
Number of Children				
One	1099	14.0%	11.3%	4.0%
2-3	1079	22.9	19.8	4.5
4-7	417	32.9	27.8	8.4
8 or more	27	44.4	25.9	18.5
Age of Child Allegedly Maltreated				
Under three	618	19.4%	16.7%	3.9%
3 to 6	623	24.1	19.6	6.4
over six	1545	20.3	16.9	5.3

friends and relatives to intervene for them, or through various "acting out" behaviors. That the Division of Youth Services is the most frequent reporter of child maltreatment in cases where the child is removed from the home (Table 21) and that it is the older children, those over six years of age, who are least likely to have an alleged maltreatment case "closed" (Table 20) is evidence consistent with this notion.

The age of the child reported for maltreatment appears to be unrelated to recidivism (Table 23). A more controlled analysis of recidivism is needed--one that controls for the age of the child alleged as maltreated in families of varying sizes. Perhaps, our category, children six or over, may contain too many children who are too young to be able to take, for themselves, the measures that would lead to repeatedly being reported as maltreated.

In summary, only the number of children in a family appears to be related to recidivism. We do not yet know if this finding holds when actual maltreatment is examined. Nor do we know the mechanisms by which large families appear conducive to recidivism of reported maltreatment.

The Effects of the Reporter on Recidivism

The reporter of alleged maltreatment may very well affect the inclination of protective service workers to see a particular case of alleged maltreatment as actual maltreatment (Table 17). The reporter then, may affect the case plan (disposition--Tables 18-21) and, through such intervention, the rate of the recidivism of child maltreatment.

When the courts are the reporters of the initial incident of alleged maltreatment, then recidivism of reported, alleged maltreatment is lowest (Table 24). In Table 20 we saw that when the courts were the

Table 24: Recidivism: Percent with at Least One Subsequent Allegation of Maltreatment by Reporter and Found Abuser

	N	Percent with any Subsequent Allegation of Maltreatment	Percent with a More Severe Subsequent Allegation of Maltreatment	Percent with a Less Severe Subsequent Allegation of Maltreatment
Reporter				
Court/lawyer	36	11.1%	8.3%	2.8%
DYS*	86	22.1	17.4	9.3
Police	298	21.5	20.8	2.7
Medical personnel	251	22.7	17.9	4.8
School personnel	259	17.8	14.7	5.0
Social workers	235	19.1	16.2	5.5
Relatives	662	23.4	18.3	7.5
Neighbors	598	19.1	16.2	3.7
Babysitters	20	15.0	15.0	0.0
Anonymous	266	19.9	16.5	4.9
Abuser after Investigation				
Mother	621	23.7%	19.5%	6.6%
Father	216	22.7	18.5	6.5
Both parents	258	27.5	22.5	7.0
Stepmother	20	20.0	20.0	0.0
Stepfather	80	22.5	21.3	6.3
Mother's boyfriend	23	21.7	21.7	4.3
No abuser	1062	18.5	15.3	4.1

*The Division of Youth Services

reporters, the child more often was removed from the home. When the Division of Youth Services reported the initial case, the disposition of removing the child from the home was even more likely--more likely than for any other category of reporter. Yet, the rate of recidivism for cases initially reported by the Division of Youth Services is high.

The courts clearly have more authority to intervene in ways they deem appropriate, but it seems that more is potentially suggested in this table. The courts deal with children of all ages, both young children and older children, and they deal (one would expect) with only quite serious cases. On the other hand, the Division of Youth Services deals primarily with older children and certainly at times with less serious cases ("problem" teens, runaways, etc.). Further, they do not have the fullest power of the law, as do the courts. It is paradoxical that cases reported by the Division of Youth Services are more likely to result in removal of a child from a situation of high risk for further abuse, and yet are cases with a high rate of recidivism. Perhaps, the paradox is explained by the age of the children involved, the power of this unit to enforce, for the "necessary" time, complete removal of the child from the home and the degree to which the Division of Youth Services has less power by virtue of handling a broader range of types of child maltreatment.

There are a few noteworthy differences in rates of recidivism of reported, alleged maltreatment among the various categories of reporters. One difference, though small, stands out in that it suggests a serious gap in power/authority. Among professionals reporting child maltreatment, medical personnel have the highest (although not significantly higher rate of recidivism. The types of cases that medical personnel are

likely to report, are also likely to be found valid (Table 17) and one would expect the cases are likely to be "serious." Yet, in Table 20 we saw that cases reported by medical personnel were quite unlikely to result in the child being removed from his/her home.

Among non-professionals who initially report a child maltreatment case, the rate of recidivism is about the same if the reporter is a relative, a neighbor, a babysitter or is anonymous. If this portion of Table 24 suggests anything, it is that relatives might be taken a bit more seriously than perhaps they are when they report child maltreatment (see Table 17) for they, among non-professional reporters are most likely to report a case where there is later another allegation of child maltreatment. But, caution is necessary here as this may merely reflect relatives' greater stake in the child in question and also differing opinions among relatives about how the child is to best be raised. Such differences of opinion, if serious, might well lead to repeated allegations of child maltreatment. It is clearly necessary, in future analyses, to control for the validity of the subsequent allegation of maltreatment.

The Effect of the Relationship of the Abuser to the Abused on Recidivism

The person whom the social worker finds to be the abuser after investigation has little effect on recidivism of reported, alleged child maltreatment (Table 24). There is a slight tendency for the rate of recidivism to be higher if both parents were found to share the responsibility for maltreatment. However, the abuser after investigation did not have any affect on the disposition of the initial case (table not shown). The potential for reducing maltreatment is unclear because the

nature of intervention appears to be unrelated to who is found, initially, to be the abuser. But, if in cases where both parents are found to be abusive the risk of recidivism for a child is increased, then perhaps these cases should receive the more extreme dispositions available to protective service workers.

If a protective service worker, after investigation, finds there is no abuser, recidivism of at least reported, alleged maltreatment is still high. It may be that some cases are slipping through the protective services system. On the other hand, it may be that protective service workers are forced to take on an additional burden--they must deal with "non abuse" cases not just once (as indicated in the distributions in Table 17), but repeatedly. Some people may see the easy, anonymous accessibility of the hotline and Abuse Registry as a means to vent their frustrations. Some people may even do this on a continuing basis. Such use of the already over-burdened protective service workers is a serious matter and one that deserves much more attention than this preliminary analysis can give to it.

The Effect of the Type of Maltreatment on Recidivism

If the protective services system is working well, at least for the most "serious" cases of alleged maltreatment reported to them, then their interventions (dispositions) in the cases found valid should result in lower rates of repeated maltreatment. We would then expect that among the initially reported maltreatment cases that were found by the social workers to actually involve various types of maltreatment there would be lower rates of recidivism of reported maltreatment.

The rate of recidivism of reported maltreatment varies little by the type of maltreatment initially found by the social worker (Table 25). We have seen that the type of maltreatment found does affect the type of disposition a case receives (Table 21). Yet, this initial intervention appears to have little affect on recidivism.

We reported that two serious forms of maltreatment--physical beating with injury resulting and physical beating without obvious injury--when found to have occurred, resulted in closed cases over 20 percent of the time (Table 21). These forms of maltreatment we expect are more likely than other forms to be reported by medical personnel. Surely medical neglect is likely to be reported by medical personnel. Cases reported by medical personnel, while probably more serious, are relatively unlikely to result in the child being removed from his home (Table 20). We reported that cases reported by medical personnel had a higher rate of recidivism than cases reported by other professionals (Table 24). Cases where a child is beaten and injured or is medically neglected also have higher rates of recidivism (Table 25). In short, children whom some would call abused less frequently receive the more extreme interventions at the time of the initial contact with the system and are more often subsequently again reported as maltreated.

If an initial case of maltreatment involved a lack of food, shelter and/or clothing recidivism of maltreatment is quite high. We saw in Table 21 that this form of maltreatment was most likely to result in services being provided to the family of the children alleged as maltreated. Social workers have at their disposal the resources to provide what these families appear to need. The high rate of recidivism in these cases suggests that these families need more than services and supervision.

Table 25: Recidivism: Percent with at Least One Subsequent Allegation of Maltreatment by the Social Worker's Finding of Maltreatment

	N	Percent with any Subsequent Allegation of Maltreatment	Percent with a More Severe Subsequent Allegation of Maltreatment	Percent with a Less Severe Subsequent Allegation of Maltreatment
Most "Serious Maltreatment Found by the Social Worker				
Sexual abuse	48	20.8%	18.8%	4.2%
Beating with injury	129	24.0	20.9	3.1
Beating without injury	160	21.9	16.9	7.5
Medical neglect	126	24.6	16.7	9.5
Disorganized family life	678	21.2	18.0	6.3
Abandonment	41	19.5	14.6	9.8
Left unattended	81	23.5	19.8	3.7
Lack of food, shelter and clothing	35	34.3	34.3	0.0
School problems	38	21.1	18.4	5.3
Custody conflict	121	14.9	10.7	5.8
Family moved	238	13.4	12.2	2.1
No abuse	833	18.8	15.7	4.0

The number of cases on which we are relying is quite small, but the finding is in line with much literature that suggests that these most frequently used methods of intervention are less than successful.

The lower rates of recidivism among cases initially found to be "custody conflicts" suggest that protective service workers do have some success in dealing with this type of case. In Table 21 we saw that many of these cases resulted in the child being placed with a relative. Social workers appear to be able to successfully intervene in family conflicts; they appear successful in mediating, to the satisfaction of those involved, conflicts over who can best care for the child. Further reports of alleged maltreatment are reduced.

Finally, we again see "slippage" through the protective services system reflected in a high rate of recidivism in cases where the initial charge was found to be invalid. Recidivism is nearly as high in "non-abuse" cases as it is for "serious" forms of maltreatment. This finding suggests that further analysis is necessary to pinpoint the mechanisms through which this type of "error" occurs--where an initial report is found invalid, only to have a subsequent report filed. We need, first, of course, to determine whether the subsequent report is found valid. Then, we need to know more about the backgrounds, circumstances of the first incident and more about any constraints on social workers that result in a first report being found invalid and a later report being found valid. The importance of a valid finding <u>at the first opportunity</u> is obvious.

The Effect of Case Disposition on Recidivism

The disposition of an initial alleged maltreatment case appears to have very little effect on whether or not a subsequent report of maltreatment will be reported (Table 26). Children who were already not living with their parents at the time of the initial allegation of maltreatment were likely to have low rates of recidivism (Table 23). We must presume that intervention by protective service workers, was not responsible for that reduction in recidivism. Removal of a child from his/her home appears not to result in any reduction in recidivism of maltreatment (see the summary section of Table 26). More precisely, children who are placed with relatives and children who are simply removed retain quite high rates of recidivism, while those placed in foster care have lower rates of recidivism. The differences here are small but as recent literature in social work has disparaged foster care and favors other forms of placement, it is important to note.

The disposition most readily available to protective services workers--supervision and/or services--tends to result in higher rates of recidivism of reported alleged maltreatment. "Limited services" produces a slightly lower rate of recidivism. At first, it might appear that the tools most available to protective service workers lead to repeated maltreatment (or allegations of maltreatment). But, when limited services are provided, a category showing less recidivism, it seems likely that the case is not a "serious" one and that all that is needed to prevent recurring maltreatment is a one-time "service." In short, the differences seen here, slight as they are, may not reflect a failure of the methods used by protective services workers but rather that different dispositions are used for different types (levels of

Table 26: Recidivism: Percent with at Least One Subsequent Allegation of Maltreatment by Case Disposition

	N	Percent with any Subsequent Allegation of Maltreatment	Percent with a More Severe Subsequent Allegation of Maltreatment	Percent with a Less Severe Subsequent Allegation of Maltreatment
Disposition of the Case After Investigation				
Case closed	1034	18.3%	15.0%	4.6%
Could not locate family	251	16.7	14.7	2.4
Limited services provided	343	18.4	16.0	3.5
Supervision provided	300	25.0	20.3	7.7
Both supervision and services provided	142	27.5	19.7	8.5
Services provided	116	25.0	22.4	4.3
Foster care	63	17.5	15.9	1.6
Child placed with a relative	160	21.3	18.8	6.3
Child removed from the home	91	22.0	17.6	8.8
Referred to another agency	144	25.7	22.2	6.9
Emergency shelter only	7	28.6	28.6	0.0
Cleint terminated	40	25.0	17.5	7.5
Case is still pending	120	20.0	18.3	4.2
Social worker was unable to make a disposition	20	35.0	25.0	10.0
Other	18	16.7	16.7	0.0
Summary:				
Closed	1034	18.3%	15.0%	4.6%
Supervision and/or services	908	22.9	18.9	5.7
Child removed	314	20.7	17.8	6.1
Case referred	144	25.7	22.2	6.9

seriousness) of maltreatment. Further analysis, taking these factors into account is clearly indicated.

Probably our most important finding is that among those cases initially closed the rate of recidivism is nearly as high as for all other types of case dispositions. Nearly one-fifth of the cases which were found to be either invalid or were thought to be sufficiently "served" so that they might be closed resulted in repeated reports. Over a third of the once-alleged cases are closed, yet nearly 20 percent of these cases later are again in contact with the Abuse Registry. Nineteen percent of the children initially found to not have been abused were later again reported for maltreatment (Table 25) and 18 percent of the cases that are "closed" are, later, again reported to the Abuse Registry (Table 26). Either "true" abuse cases are not being treated at the first opportunity or "non-abuse" cases are being repeatedly reported, tying up valuable social service workers' time.

In summary, very few of the variables we have presented appear related to recidivism. The number of children in a family does appear to be directly related to recidivism as we have measured it. But, the most dramatic finding is that the treatment (intervention) techniques that are available do not, in our analysis, appear to reduce recidivism of reported maltreatment.

TRENDS IN THE ABUSE REGISTRY OPERATION

The Florida Child Abuse Registry has been in existence since 1970. A dramatic period of growth took place when a public media campaign to encourage the reporting of suspected cases of child maltreatment began in the early 1970s. The impact of this campaign was immediate (Sussman and Cohen, 1975) as the number of reports of child maltreatment rose from 17 to 19,000 from 1970 to 1971 and leveled off at about 35,000 reports per year after 1973. Our sample of 2,889 cases cover this period--we have 3 cases of maltreatment first reported in 1970; 102 in 1971; 446 in 1972; over 500 in 1973 and 1974; and, nearly 500 in 1975 and 1976. Our sampling procedure meant that we collected data for only a portion of 1977 (through mid-September) and therefore we have only 240 cases of reported child maltreatment for 1977.

Analysis of the operation of the Abuse Registry over time is further complicated as a major reorganization of the Social and Rehabilitative Services Department, of which the Child Abuse Registry is a part, took place in 1975-1976. This major change not only affected the organization and operation of the Abuse Registry, but also included moving the physical location of the Registry from Jacksonville to Tallahassee (in 1976). Major manpower and personnel changes also occurred.

Other research reported (Sussman and Cohen, 1975; Child Protection Report, 1975) suggests that only a small portion of the cases reported to the Abuse Registry are investigated. Our data certainly do not reflect any tendency on the part of Abuse Registry personnel to fail

to investigate all reports of child maltreatment possible (if a family cannot be located, then obviously an investigation cannot take place). Our longitudinal data, collected in 1977, may mean that a much higher proportion of reported cases have now been investigated.

Another important change occurred during the period covered by our sample. The 1970s were a time of rising national awareness of the problem of child maltreatment. In earlier times mistreatment of children had, from time to time, raised a public outcry, but the 1970s saw a new and growing concern on the part of the public. More federal monies were allocated for the detection, prevention and treatment of child maltreatment. The public media presented many programs on child abuse ranging from documentaries to soap operas. And, most states, having enacted child abuse reporting laws in the late 1960s, enacted more forceful laws aimed at discovering and preventing child maltreatment.

The time period covered by our study is, therefore, a time of increasing awareness of child maltreatment. We cannot, with our current data, determine whether any changes we may uncover, over time, are due to: 1) Florida's particular emphasis on child maltreatment in the early 1970s; 2) the reorganization and/or relocation of the Florida Child Abuse Registry (1975-1976) or, 3) the nationally growing awareness of the problem of child maltreatment. But, the particular timing of changes we observe in our data (or stability) can suggest which of these factors may be most significant. We do know that the intensive public campaign and the institution of the WATS line occurred in October of 1971 and was therefore probably well established in the public's eye by 1972. The reorganization and relocation of the Abuse Registry occurred in 1976 (the reorganization initiated and anticipated in 1975).

Changes in Background Factors

Table 27 shows that there is really no variation in the percentage of boys or girls who are reported as maltreated from 1971 through mid-1977. In each year children so reported are about equally likely to be boys or to be girls.

On the other hand, the proportion of whites reported from 1971 through 1977 appears to have declined while the proportion of Blacks has increased. This is a bit surprising as census projections suggest that the Black population in Florida from 1970 to 1975 declined slightly. In 1970 the Black population was about 15 percent, and declined to about 14 percent by the time of the 1975 census estimate (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1973 and 1977). In our sample data Blacks are therefore overrepresented in all years, but particularly so in the later years covered by our data.

The percentage of children living with only their father decreased from 1971 to 1972 (Table 28). There is little consistent variation over time in the proportion of children living in other family situations. Nor is there any particular reason to believe that family composition would vary over time.

The recent emphasis on ZPG (zero population growth) and the declining birth rate would lead us to expect a slight change in family size. One-child families make up 46 percent of the cases first reported in 1977 and only 39 percent of the cases first reported in 1971 (Table 28). Very large families (those with eight or more children) were four times more common in 1971 than in 1977.

The proportion of children in a given age category fluctuates over time, but not in a consistent pattern: there is no steady increase,

Table 27: Background Characteristics of Children Alleged As Maltreated, 1971 - 1977: Sex and Race

	Year of First Allegation of Maltreatment						
	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
SEX	N=102	N=446	N=543	N=512	N=475	N=477	N=238
Males	52.9%	46.6%	50.6%	48.6%	47.6%	49.5%	53.4%
Females	47.1	53.4	49.4	51.4	52.4	50.5	46.6
RACE	N=99	N=442	N=544	N=512	N=471	N=480	N=235
White	82.8%	77.1%	81.4%	77.5%	78.3%	74.4%	73.2%
Black	17.2	21.9	17.6	20.7	19.1	23.3	24.7
Oriental	0.0	0.0	.2	0.0	.2	.6	.4
Latin Am.	0.0	.7	.6	1.2	1.9	1.7	.4
Other	0.0	.2	.2	.6	.4	0.0	1.3

Table 28: Background Characteristics of Children Alleged As Maltreated, 1971-1977: Age, Number of Children and Parental Presence

	Year of First Allegation of Maltreatment						
	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
AGE	N=101	N=444	N=544	N=509	N=474	N=477	N=236
Under 3	21.8%	16.0%	24.6%	25.0%	22.4%	23.3%	19.1%
3 to 6	19.8	21.2	23.9	21.0	23.0	19.9	29.2
Under 6	41.6	37.2	48.5	46.0	45.4	43.2	48.3
Over 6	58.4	62.8	51.5	54.0	54.6	56.8	51.7
NUMBER OF CHILDREN	N=92	N=415	N=500	N=475	N=433	N=434	N=218
One	39.1%	33.7%	38.6%	42.7%	45.7%	45.9%	45.9%
2,3	40.2	44.1	42.0	42.3	40.0	37.6	40.4
4-7	18.5	21.2	18.4	13.5	13.4	15.7	13.3
8 or more	2.2	1.0	1.0	1.5	.9	.9	.5
PARENTAL PRESENCE	N=100	N=439	N=538	N=504	N=464	N=473	N=239
Both present	30.0%	38.7%	42.8%	41.5%	42.5%	37.0%	38.5%
Mother only	42.0	44.0	42.8	41.9	42.9	47.8	49.4
Father only	16.0	7.5	8.2	5.6	8.0	6.1	6.3
Neither present	12.0	9.8	6.3	11.1	6.7	9.1	5.9

over time, for any age group; nor, is there a one-time dramatic change from one year to another. The changes in the ages of children reported as maltreated (Table 28) cannot be readily linked to the publicity campaign, the Social and Rehabilitative Services reorganization, or to more general growing awareness of the problem of child maltreatment. Family composition of those reported for child maltreatment appears to have changed little from 1971 to 1977.

Changes in the Percent of Valid Cases and Changes in WATS Line Usage

For this analysis, the validity of the case and the manner in which it was reported to the Abuse Registry is particularly important. The instituting of the state-wide WATS line to receive allegations of child maltreatment occurred early in the period covered by our data. Different types of cases may be more often received when this means of informing the Abuse Registry is available. The proportion of cases coming to the attention of the Registry via the WATS line is important. If the institution of a WATS line system is helping to uncover cases of child maltreatment that would otherwise not come to the attention of child protective workers, then we would expect that simultaneously with the increased use of the WATS line, the proportion of "valid" maltreatment cases would increase (or at least remain constant).

It is clear (Table 29) that in 1972 (the first year the WATS line was fully operational) and continuing into 1973 there was a steady rise in the proportion of cases that came to the attention of the Abuse Registry via the WATS line (Table 29). After 1973, the proportion of cases that were received on the WATS line appears to have leveled off. With this evidence of increased usage of the WATS line, we would expect,

Table 29: Proportion of Cases Found Valid and Received on The WATS Line, 1971 - 1977

	Year of First Allegation of Maltreatment						
	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
PERCENT	N=91	N=404	N=472	N=437	N=417	N=437	N=218
VALID	76.9	63.1	60.4	58.1	61.2	50.3	56.0
PERCENT RECEIVED VIA WATS LINE	N=102	N=449	N=552	N=517	N=480	N=486	N=242
	7.8	17.8	44.6	39.3	39.0	43.4	37.6

if it is "effective," that the proportion of valid cases would either remain constant from 1972 through 1977, or would actually increase (if the WATS line were exceptionally useful in uncovering cases that would otherwise not come to the attention of the Registry).

The percentage of "valid" child maltreatment cases showed a sharp decline the year the WATS line was first operational, and an additional decline from 1972 to 1973, the first full year after the system was operational. After 1973, the proportion of allegations of child maltreatment that were, on investigation, found valid varies between 50 and 60 percent, but never again reaches the pre-WATS line level of over three-quarters of reported cases.

There is nothing conclusive here about the usefulness of the WATS line. Certainly there is the suggestion that its usage may simply increase reported child maltreatment cases, and not the reporting of valid child maltreatment. This may appear to be discouraging news to advocates of hotlines and an informed public, however, there is in these data, the possibility for further analysis to determine the actual processes that account for these results. First, the correlation between validity and a case being reported on the WATS line is not what is presented in Table 29. Second, there is no control, in Table 29, for the reporter of maltreatment, a variable we have seen affects important case decisions such as validity and disposition, as well as recidivism of reported maltreatment. Finally, there is no control for the type of maltreatment being reported in each of these years. But, the implications of Table 29 are sobering and demand further analysis.

Changes in the Reporter of Maltreatment and the Abuser

All categories of professionals were less likely to report child maltreatment by 1973 than they were in 1971, particularly social workers (Table 30). At the same time relatives, and particularly neighbors and anonymous reporters, increased from 1971 to 1972. This continued for neighbors and anonymous reporters into 1973. Anonymous reporters tended to drop off by 1977. Neighbors, however, continued to report child maltreatment at a steady rate after 1973.

The proportion of non-professionals, as reporters of child maltreatment, did not continue to steadily rise from 1971 to 1977 as one might have expected if the growing national awareness of this problem were "responsible." The first few years of the Florida emphasis on child maltreatment was a time of increased use of the WATS line--the vehicle that many non-professionals might well use to report maltreatment. However, there is not a continuing further increase from 1974 to 1977 in either use of the WATS line or in the proportion of non-professional reporters. This suggests that the national publicity had little additional affect over the extensive campaign mounted by Florida in 1971.

Finally, there is some indication that social workers were most unlikely to be the reporter of maltreatment in 1976--the year when the reorganization and relocation was likely to be most disruptive (Table 30). Similarly, the courts and especially the Division of Youth Services dropped as reporters of maltreatment in 1976--and these two arms of government would, of course, be effected by such a massive reorganization in the services to children, especially the Division of Youth Services. Social workers quickly resumed the pre-reorganization rate of reporting

Table 30: Variation in the Reporter of Alleged Maltreatment, the Alleged and Found Abuser, 1971-1977

	Year of First Allegation of Maltreatment						
	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
REPORTER	N=100	N=443	N=537	N=509	N=465	N=463	N=238
Medical personnel	10.0%	6.5%	7.4%	9.0%	8.6%	11.9%	11.8%
Police	16.0	12.4	10.4	11.8	10.5	8.4	8.0
School personnel	16.0	9.5	9.3	7.1	8.6	11.7	9.2
Court/lawyer	2.0	2.9	1.5	1.4	.6	.4	.4
Division of Youth Services	7.0	5.0	4.5	3.3	2.2	.4	1.3
Clergy	0.0	.5	0.0	.2	0.0	.4	0.0
Social workers	23.0	8.4	7.8	8.3	8.0	6.0	9.7
Institutions	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	.6	0.0
Relatives	22.0	28.2	21.9	19.3	24.1	25.0	23.5
Neighbors	5.0	15.8	22.3	23.8	24.5	22.0	23.9
Babysitters	0.0	.2	.4	1.4	.6	.9	.8
Anonymous	1.0	8.1	12.7	11.6	8.2	9.1	6.7
Other	0.0	2.5	1.7	2.9	4.1	3.0	4.6
Alleged Abuser	N=102	N=449	N=552	N=517	N=480	N=486	N=242
Mother	50.0%	49.7%	49.6%	45.5%	46.0%	47.1%	48.3%
Father	14.7	13.1	15.6	14.1	16.5	14.2	12.4
Both parents	17.6	17.8	21.2	23.8	21.7	19.3	17.4
Stepmother	2.0	2.0	.9	1.0	1.0	.4	2.5
Stepfather	4.9	6.5	4.2	5.8	5.2	5.1	6.6
Mother's boy-friend	2.0	.9	1.8	1.5	1.0	2.1	1.2
Aunt	0.0	.4	.5	.4	.6	1.2	.4
Grandmother	1.0	.7	.7	1.0	1.5	2.3	.8
Babysitter	0.0	.2	1.1	.6	.4	.6	.8
Other	6.9	6.9	4.3	5.6	5.4	7.2	7.9
No abuser	1.0	1.8	0.0	.8	.6	.4	1.7
Abuser After Investigation	N=102	N=449	N=552	N=517	N=480	N=486	N=242
Mother	30.4%	27.2%	23.0%	19.7%	21.5%	15.6%	18.6%
Father	5.9	7.1	7.1	7.9	9.6	7.4	5.8
Both parents	14.7	9.6	10.7	7.5	8.1	8.0	7.9
Stepmother	2.0	1.1	.4	.4	.6	.4	1.2
Stepfather	4.9	3.3	1.8	2.9	2.1	2.9	4.1
Mother's boy-friend	1.0	.7	.9	1.0	.6	1.0	0.0
Aunt	0.0	.2	.4	.2	.4	.8	.4
Grandmother	1.0	.2	.4	.6	.6	1.0	.4
Babysitter	0.0	0.0	1.3	0.0	0.0	.6	.4
Other	19.6	15.6	21.4	23.8	20.4	17.3	18.6
No abuser	20.6	35.0	32.8	36.0	36.0	44.9	42.6

child maltreatment, while the courts and the Division of Youth Services rates stayed at about their 1976 level. Perhaps, this indicates the greater authority given to the Social and Rehabilitative Services Department for more complete responsibility for reported child maltreatment cases.

There appears to be no difference in the person who is alleged as the abuser in a reported maltreatment case, over time (Table 30). Mother, father, both parents and other people alleged as abusers appear to be as likely to be the alleged abuser as often in 1971 as in 1977. There is, however, change from 1971 to 1977 in the abuser found after investigation of the reported maltreatment case.

The mother is proportionately less likely to be found to be the abuser after investigation from 1971 to 1973, after which the proportion of cases in which the mother is the found abuser levels off. This appears to be coterminous with both the media campaign and with the decrease seen in the proportions of cases that are reported by social workers. Which, if either, of these factors is most relevant cannot be determined with our data.

The proportion of cases where there was no abuser found after investigation rises sharply from 1971 to 1972, when the media campaign was begun and when social workers became increasingly less often the reporters of maltreatment (Table 30). The year of reorganization, 1976, shows the highest level of "no abuser" after investigation, although 1977 is also quite high (perhaps reflecting a trend toward more and more "non-abuse" cases being reported). In Table 29, we saw a similar drop in the proportion of cases found valid, over time.

Changes in the Type of Maltreatment--
Alleged and Found

Disorganized family life and abandonment, as forms of alleged maltreatment, decreased from 1971 through 1977 (Table 31). However, in each case the decrease is rather steady and quite small. One would be tempted to attribute this to the decrease in the proportion of social workers reporting child maltreatment, but there is not a dramatic change in the proportion of these types of maltreatment during the critical years of 1971 and 1972. Allegations of beating severe enough for the child to sustain injury do increase from 1971 to 1972, but although this is coterminous with the decrease of professionals as reporters, it does not seem consistent that non-professionals would allege this type of maltreatment more often than professionals (especially medical personnel). Here, the public awareness campaign seems a more likely explanation.

Disorganized family life, when found to have actually occurred, does show a quite steep decline from 1971 to 1972, and then a more steady decline (with one exception) through 1976 (Table 31). This appears more likely to result from the drop in the proportion of social workers reporting child maltreatment than from the public awareness campaign. Disorganized family life seems to be the kind of description of "neglect" that a social worker, as opposed to both other professionals and non-professionals, would be likely to use. Noteworthy, also, is the fact that disorganized family life is the type of child maltreatment found less often in 1976 than in any other year--the year social workers may well have been tied up with the reorganization. However, a trend toward more clearly (less generally) describing the actual type of

Table 31: Variation in Alleged and Found Maltreatment, 1971-1977

	Year of First Allegation of Maltreatment						
	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
Most Serious Alleged Maltreatment	N=101	N=449	N=550	N=515	N=479	N=486	N=240
Sexual abuse	2.0%	3.3%	2.4%	4.1%	3.1%	2.7%	3.8%
Beath	0.0	0.0	0.0	.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Beating with injury	5.9	10.9	14.4	15.3	13.4	17.1	15.0
Beating without injury	16.8	13.4	17.6	16.5	20.0	16.7	19.2
Malnutrition	0.0	1.1	1.8	.6	.8	1.4	.4
Medical neglect	13.9	9.4	7.6	8.2	9.2	11.7	8.3
Disorganized family life	28.7	27.4	26.9	25.8	24.4	23.7	24.2
Abandonment	5.9	4.5	1.6	3.5	2.7	2.5	.4
Left unattended	12.9	11.4	11.5	10.1	9.6	9.1	12.9
Lack of food, shelter and clothing	8.9	9.1	10.7	9.5	10.2	8.6	8.3
School problems	0.0	1.8	.9	1.2	1.7	1.2	2.1
No abuse	0.0	1.1	0.0	.2	0.0	.2	0.0
Custody case	4.0	2.4	1.5	1.2	2.1	1.4	2.1
Other	1.0	4.2	3.1	3.7	2.7	3.7	3.3
Most Serious Maltreatment Found by the Social Worker	N=98	N=438	N=537	N=483	N=460	N=473	N=227
Sexual abuse	2.0%	1.8%	1.1%	1.4%	2.0%	2.1%	2.2%
Death	0.0	0.0	.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Beating with injury	5.1	3.2	4.7	3.9	6.5	4.7	5.7
Beating without injury	8.2	5.3	4.5	6.2	5.9	7.2	5.3
Malnutrition	0.0	.2	.6	.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Medical neglect	9.2	5.7	3.7	3.3	4.3	5.1	4.4
Disorganized family life	31.6	26.5	28.9	25.3	22.0	18.6	24.2
Abandonment	4.1	2.5	.7	2.1	1.3	.8	0.0
Left unattended	2.0	4.1	3.7	1.9	3.5	1.7	3.1
Lack of food, shelter, clothing	2.0	.9	1.9	1.2	1.3	.8	.9
School problems	1.0	2.7	.6	1.0	1.7	.4	1.8
No abuse	16.3	27.6	25.3	30.8	28.9	37.8	35.7
Custody case	3.1	4.8	4.3	3.7	6.1	3.0	4.4
Family moved	6.1	7.3	11.7	9.3	8.5	8.2	4.8
Other	9.2	7.3	8.2	9.5	8.0	9.5	7.5

maltreatment that has occurred could just as easily account for the differences observed.

There is a sharp increase in the proportion of reported cases found by the social worker to be non-abuse cases from 1971 to 1972. This proportion shows a tendency to increase over the full period covered by the sample. This is consistent with the finding in Table 29 that the number of valid cases among those reported is declining and the finding that during 1971-1972, professionals (especially, social workers) were declining as reporters of maltreatment and non-professionals were proportionately increasing. Finally, 1976 is the peak year in our sample data where the type of maltreatment found by the social worker is "no abuse," with almost two-fifths of the cases being seen as "non-abuse" cases.

Still, it is clear that although there may be some historical trends at work, some effects of the media campaign, and some effects of the reorganization of the Social and Rehabilitative Services in Florida, the differences shown in Table 31 are quite small. Both alleged and found maltreatment types among reported cases have changed very little, in Florida, from 1971 to 1977.

Changes in Case Disposition

The disposition of cases of alleged maltreatment parallels the results we have seen for other variables in this section: validity, found abuser, and to some extent the type of maltreatment that is found (or not found) to have occurred. Cases that are closed (Table 32) rise quite sharply in 1972, and the peak year for cases being closed is 1976. Supervision and/or services decline quite sharply from 1971 through

Table 32: Variation in Disposition of Alleged Child Maltreatment Cases, 1971 to 1977

	Year of First Allegation of Maltreatment						
	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
Disposition of Case after Investigation	N=102	N=447	N=546	N=504	N=474	N=484	N=234
Closed	16.7%	26.8%	32.1%	37.7%	38.2%	46.9%	44.0%
Could not locate family	4.9	8.1	11.9	9.1	9.3	8.3	5.1
Limited services provided	11.8	11.0	12.6	11.5	11.4	12.2	15.4
Supervision provided	18.6	14.8	10.3	10.5	7.8	7.2	9.0
Supervision and services provided	5.9	7.8	5.9	3.8	4.2	3.9	3.8
Services provided	5.9	6.3	4.2	4.6	2.7	2.5	5.1
Foster care	3.9	.9	2.6	2.4	3.2	1.2	2.1
Child placed with a relative	9.8	8.3	4.9	4.4	5.9	5.2	3.0
Child removed	4.9	3.4	3.8	3.8	3.6	1.7	2.1
Referred to another agency	6.9	4.7	4.9	4.2	6.3	5.0	5.6
Emergency shelter	1.0	.4	.2	0.0	.2	.2	.4
Client terminated services	2.0	.2	1.6	2.0	1.7	1.7	.4
Case still pending	4.9	5.6	3.8	5.0	3.8	2.9	3.4
Social worker unable to to make a disposition	2.9	1.1	.4	.6	.4	.8	0.0
Other	0.0	.7	.5	.6	1.3	.4	.4
Summary:							
Closed	16.7%	26.8%	32.1%	37.7%	38.2%	46.9%	44.0%
Supervision and/or services	42.2	39.9	33.0	30.4	26.1	25.8	33.3
Child removed	18.6	12.6	11.3	10.6	12.7	8.1	7.2
Case Referred	6.9	4.7	4.9	4.2	6.3	5.0	5.6

1973 and the lowest year is 1976. Similarly, removal of a child from his home drops quite sharply from 1971 to 1972 and in 1976 a quite low proportion of cases result in removal of the child from his home. However, in the case of removal of the child from his home there appears also to be a fairly steady decrease over the entire sample period, perhaps reflecting a national trend away from taking the child from the home (and yet we saw in Table 26 that recidivism was lower when the child was removed).

Foster care placement, presumably that which requires the greatest amount of social worker's time, declined the most both in 1972 (when social workers as reporters of maltreatment declined) and in 1976 (the year of reorganization). Similarly, supervision, which may take more social worker time than the provision of services, declined in 1972 and in 1976.

We cannot be sure which factors are responsible for the trends noted in the data. Controlling for the reporter of maltreatment might clarify some of these issues, as would controlling for the type of maltreatment, but such analysis is beyond the scope of this report.

Length of Time in the System

We coded the date of the first report alleging child maltreatment for each family in our sample. Similarly, we recorded the date of the last report of any kind the Abuse Registry had on a family--most often this was an investigation report. We know that for about 20 percent of the families there was more than one allegation of maltreatment. For these families, a last report date could be several years later. We wished to estimate the amount of time the average family, whether or not there

were multiple allegations, stayed involved in the protective services system. Later we will separate multiple allegation families from families with only one allegation of maltreatment on file with the Abuse Registry.

Obviously, for first allegations received in 1977, the last report we have can only be in 1977. A similar problem exists, at least for 1976 and 1975--we can, for those two years, only have last reports that are dated the same year, one year later and two years later, respectively. Some of the families who first entered the protective services system in, for instance, 1975, will be there for four years, but our sample covers only through part of 1977. Thus, our estimate of time in the system is necessarily conservative.

Allegations first received in 1972 differ remarkedly from those received in subsequent years. First, nearly half of the cases first received in 1972 have no date on the last report--this information is missing. Second, in 1972 about one-third, as opposed to two-thirds in later years, of the reports first received had a last report date in the same year. As this was the first year for which the WATS line was fully operational, there is some suspicion that the procedures for filling out forms were not yet fully established. We have reservations about the data on the length of the time in the system for those cases received first in 1972. Perhaps, 1973 is the best year available in our data to gauge the average amount of time in the system: there are enough subsequent years to find many families that are involved with the protective services system for many years; and, the Abuse Registry had been in operation long enough for social workers to become familiar with recording information on the forms.

In Table 33, then, for 1973 we see that over a third of the cases are in the system for more than a year. And, 11 percent of the cases were involved with the protective services system over a span of three or more years. This finding is of clearer importance when we remember that over 40 percent of the reported cases are found invalid.

Time to Respond to Allegations of Maltreatment

In almost 60 percent of the cases not only was the date of the first allegation of maltreatment present, but also the social worker's investigation report gave the date of the first actual contact with the family in attempting to investigate the allegation. Sometimes this contact was via a telephone call, sometimes a letter and often a home visit. In some emergency situations the contact would be at a local police station, a neighbor or babysitter's home or some other unusual place. And these first contacts tended to happen at any hour of the day, as the apparent immediacy of risk to the child demanded.

In a third of the cases response was the same day of the allegation--that is, some contact with the child or his/her family was made the day the allegation was received: the investigation began immediately (Table 34). In nearly half the cases the response was the day after the allegation. In nearly two-thirds of the cases response was within a week. The mean response (in days) of 22.99 grossly exaggerates the real promptness with which social workers respond to allegations of child maltreatment, undoubtedly due to some very excessively large number of days to respond in certain unusual cases--for example if the family has moved, or is in some other way temporarily "lost."

Table 33: Date of First Allegation of Abuse by Year of Last Report*

Year of Last Report Filed	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
	N=231	N=480	N=500	N=464	N=477
1972	36.8%	- -	- -	- -	- -
1973	25.5	63.7%	- -	- -	- -
1974	16.9	25.2	73.0%	- -	- -
1975	10.0	4.0	16.8	76.7%	- -
1976	7.4	4.6	5.6	19.0	80.7%
1977	3.5	2.5	4.6	4.3	19.3

*The date of the last report is missing for 13.6 percent of the cases. There are 44 cases missing the date of the first allegation report and 259 cases were first reported in 1977, a year that is only partially represented in the sample and is excluded from this table.

Table 34: Time Taken to Respond to an Allegation of Child Maltreatment

	Percent	Cumulative Percent
	N=1696	N=1696
Response was the same day	31.6%	31.6%
Response was the next day	12.0	43.6
Response 2 - 7 days or less	20.7	64.3
Response 8 - 14 days or less	11.2	75.4
Response 15 - 21 days or less	4.0	79.5
Response was over three weeks	20.5	100.0

Mean Response in days: 22.992

This data is presented only to indicate the problems encountered, and yet obviously overcome in large measure, by social workers. It should be remembered that we have found that of all maltreatment cases reported some are merely family "feuds" really not requiring outside intervention. Florida social workers may also be needlessly overburdened by the easy access that anyone has to report what they "believe" to be maltreatment (and the social worker must investigate all cases received). Finally, the number of allegations where minimal information is given on how to locate the family involved is substantial. That response is so prompt is a tribute to the work of the child protective service workers.

Still, to fully understand response time, further analysis is indicated. Time of response should decline with the seriousness of the allegation. We would expect that seriousness of the charge is the variable that most affects response time, and that other peripheral variables (reporter of maltreatment, the alleged abuser, the background of the family allegedly maltreating their children, etc.) have little bearing on response time.

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

In this research we have not viewed an incident of maltreatment as limited to a set period of time. Rather, we suspect that the peoples and activities surrounding an accusation of child maltreatment must often form, in the minds of those involved, an "event." In our data, the first allegation of maltreatment almost always refers to a specific incident or series of incidents that may represent the culmination of many prior activities or may be a one-time occurrence. The reporter of maltreatment, the alleged abuser and the type of maltreatment alleged are a part of this event. While the investigation of reported maltreatment must follow the allegation, the maltreatment found (if any) and the abuser after investigation (if any) are so integral to the "event" that we have viewed these variables as part of the maltreatment "event." The disruption and confusion that even being reported for maltreatment must cause to parents and children alike, seems to us, a major life "event," an event lasting at least as long as the family is involved with the public social service system.

From this perspective, the sex, race and age of the child allegedly maltreated are all clearly antecedent variables. Parental presence and the number of children in the home were observed at the time of the first allegation of maltreatment. In this sense they, too, are antecedent variables. We have assumed such "family structure" variables may be associated with reported child maltreatment. We have viewed these five variables as a set of antecedent "background" variables.

We have viewed the result of the maltreatment event as dependent. Three "results" were observed in our study: the social worker's finding of the validity of the case; the case plan or disposition; and, recidivism. Validity and disposition are, of course, strongly related. But, a major finding is that disposition (particularly the decision to close a case) is not wholly dependent on validity.

While only associations are presented in this study, they were chosen with a general model in mind, a model consistent with our four proposed research objectives. The model suggests that background characterisitcs will affect a maltreatment event (objective 1); that the nature of that event will affect case validity and disposition (objective 2); and, that these factors, in turn, will affect the probability of another (reported) maltreatment event (objective 3). Additionally, we explored changes in the operation of the Florida child protection system over time (objective 4). In future research, the nine major findings of this research will guide and delimit the versions of our general model that will be tested.

1. Race and sex of the child allegedly maltreated appear, for the most part, unrelated to the maltreatment event and to the results of it. Blacks are slightly more likely to be reported for maltreatment that was later found valid. Girls are more often sexually abused. If race and sex are related to reported (or actual) maltreatment, to the validity and disposition of such a case, or to recidivism, then these effects appear to be mediated through other variables, perhaps family size or composition.

2. Age, family size and the presence (or absence) of parents of a child reported as maltreated are related to the maltreatment event and

the results of that event. Single parents appear to be at greater risk of official intervention (beyond mere reporting), especially if the single parent is the father. Children in large families are likely to be repeatedly reported as maltreated. Young children suffer more physical injury. Most importantly, the cumulative impact of the associations of these variables, particularly age and family size, with the reporter and type of maltreatment, the validity and disposition of the initial case and the probability of recidivism appear confusing.

The apparent confusion may be a result of the interaction of family size, parental presence and the age of the child allegedly maltreated. The interaction of these three variables may produce very different family "types." Some family types may be strongly related to the maltreatment event and the results of it. In a single-parent family with one young child, physical abuse and medical neglect may be common, perhaps reflecting immaturity of the caretaker and inadequate parenting skills. Single-parent families with many, and older, children may have trouble coping with their children and may physically abuse them. Life style and violence as a learned solution to problems might be more important factors in maltreatment events for this "type" of family. On the other hand, this family "type" may neglect children simply because they do not have the resources to raise them. Finally, child protective workers may find some forms of intervention more difficult in large, established families.

3. The reporter of maltreatment is strongly related to the maltreatment event and the results of it. Professionals more often report valid cases. Professionals from the legal sector report cases that more often result in legal action (removal of the child), while medical

personnel report cases that more often result in services being rendered. The "medicalization" and "legalization" of child abuse suggested by Newberger and Bourne (in press) appears to merit serious attention. Finally, non-professionals report a high proportion of invalid cases. The protective services system may be vulnerable to "misuse"--over-reporting of cases that do not need official intervention.

4. The type of maltreatment found is strongly related to two results of the maltreatment event: validity and disposition. It is not related to recidivism. Surprisingly, if there is no abuse or neglect evident, over 10 percent of the cases are found valid and if there is no abuser after investigation, 24 percent of the cases are found valid. The services provided may be more a result of services available than of those required by families in trouble. There is potential danger here:

> Although the support services offered are probably beneficial to all parents, the effects of being incorrectly labeled as a child abuser, and the ethical concerns over record keeping, must be considered.
>
> (Steinmetz, 1978:13)

Finally, in 20 percent of the cases where children have been beaten (with or without injury) the case is closed. If the beating involves injury, 20 percent of the children are removed from the home. If no injury is involved only 15 percent are removed. Social service workers appear to need dramatic evidence of clear risk of danger to a child before they can or do take the more extreme actions available to them.

5. Public child protective service systems may be vulnerable to misuse. A significant number of the cases they handle may not really involve child maltreatment. Protective service workers appear quite successful in mediating family custody conflicts, but it is not clear that this is a "child protection" function. The inability to locate

significant numbers of families reported for maltreatment may also represent a kind of "non-abuse" case. Family feuds, neighborhood quarrels and "hoax" calls (to the WATS line) may, in part, account for insufficient information on the allegation report for the social worker to locate a family. Cases of this type require the same initial attention as all cases, but as they may not involve child maltreatment, they represent a serious misuse of the system unless they can be quickly identified and dismissed.

6. Recidivism of reported maltreatment is unrelated to background characteristics (except family size) and the initial incident of maltreatment. Recidivism is almost as likely in cases initially labeled "non-abuse" as in cases of "true" maltreatment. Recidivism appears highest where the most services (interventions) are provided. These findings may suggest that intervention is ineffective. But, it is just as likely that the greater the degree of intervention the more serious (or difficult) the initial case was, and therefore the greater likelihood of recidivism.

7. The percent of valid cases decreases as the use of the WATS line as a vehicle for reporting child maltreatment increases. Over the same time period, professionals decrease as reporters of maltreatment, while non-professionals increase. It may be that as mechanisms for non-professionals to report child maltreatment are made easily accessible, the number of reports increases, but the number of cases of "true" child maltreatment discovered does not increase. Non-professionals more often report invalid cases.

Social workers appear to be investigating a large number of "false" reports, a task that would be unnecessary if the number of "false" reports

were reduced. In turn, the time spent investigating "false" reports necessarily reduces the time available for more thorough investigation of "true" reports. Publicity, the mechanism that presumably encourages non-professional reporting, must not only "inform," it must do so effectively:

> Though the efforts of concerned professionals are indispensible to the coordination and improvement of services, the key to real progress is an informed and aware citizenry. . . . Mounting public awareness now needs to be sharpened and developed into a constructive, effective force for far-reaching reform.
>
> (Besharov, 1975:3-4)

An "informed citizenry" appears insufficient. Indeed, it may become only an informant citizenry.

8. The Florida media campaign, and the reorganization and relocation of the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services (Child Abuse Registry) appeared to affect the operation of child protective services. The media campaign appeared to affect the ratio of professional to non-professional reporters, and probably through that, the proportion of reported cases found valid (and the dispositions of reported cases). Interestingly, the media campaign appeared to have dramatic immediate effects, from 1971 to 1972, and these effects (at least some of them) appeared to be long-lasting although the intensity of the campaign was not. Perhaps, national attention to the problem of child abuse complemented Florida's early intensive effort. Other changes, over time, appeared related to the reorganization. These changes did not persist--they occurred only for the period of reorganization--1976. If changes resulting from massive reorganizations are, indeed, short-lived, this is good news: one frequently raised objection to change may be far less of an obstacle than previously suspected.

9. Finally, we found that filing of investigation reports is a lengthy process, thereby actively involving families in protective service systems for long periods of time. This is clearly an administrative problem that deserves effort toward resolution. Families and children deserve to be "cleared" as quickly as possible. In contrast, response to allegations of child maltreatment is prompt. Child protective service workers, in Florida at least, appear to respond almost immediately, (and we did not control for the seriousness of the allegation). Florida workers have realistic priorities: make contact with the family reported for maltreatment now; file the investigation report when there is time. But, the importance to a family of "clearance," either through a treatment plan or through the closing of the case, points to an unfilled need (Steinmetz, 1978). While public child protective service workers need public support to protect children in danger, they also need public support (in the form of sufficient trained manpower) to be able to quickly service all reports and dismiss those not involving child maltreatment.

REFERENCES

Alberts, M. E., "Child Abuse," Journal of the Iowa Medical Society, Vol. 62 (May) 1972.

Alfaro, J., "The Relationship Between Child Abuse and Neglect and Later Socially Deviant Behavior," Report to the New York State Assembly Select Committee on Child Abuse, 1978.

Berkeley Planning Associates, "Evaluation of Child Abuse and Neglect Demonstration Projects 1974-1977: Vol II Final Report," Report to the National Center for Health Services Research, U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Hyattsville, Maryland, 1977a.

Berkeley Planning Associates, "Evaluation of Child Abuse and Neglect Demonstration Projects 1974-1977: Vol VI. Quality of the Case Management Process; Final Report," Prepared for National Center for Health Services Research, U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Hyattsville, Maryland, 1977b.

Besharov, D. J., "Building a Community Response to Child Abuse and Maltreatment," Children Today, Vol. 4 (5), 1975, pp. 2-4.

Carr, A., "Some Preliminary Findings on the Association Between Child Maltreatment and Juvenile Misconduct in Eight New York Counties," A Report to the Administration for Children, Youth and Families: National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, 1977.

Carr, A., R. J. Gelles and E. F. Hargreaves, "Family Composition and Its Relation to Child Maltreatment and Juvenile Delinquency," presented at the Third Annual Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect, New York, April 17, 1978.

Child Protection Report, Washington, D. C., March 13, 1975.

DeFrancis V., "The Fundamentals of Child Protection," Denver: The American Humane Association, 1955.

Elmer, E., Children In Jeopardy: A Study of Abused Minors and Their Families, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1967.

Feinstein, H. M., "Group Therapy for Mothers with Infanticidal Impulses," American Journal of Psychiatry, Vol. 120, 1964, pp. 882-886.

Fontana, V. J., "Physical Abuse of Children," Pediatrics, Vol. 45, 1970, pp. 509-510.

Foster, H. H., Jr. and D. J. Freed, "A Bill of Rights for Children," Family Law Quarterly, Vol. 6 (Winter), 1972, p. 345.

Gelles, R. J., "Child Abuse as Psychopathology: A Sociological Critique and Reformulation," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, Vol. 43 (July), 1973, pp. 611-621.

_____, "The Violent Home: A Study of Physical Aggression Between Husbands and Wives, Beverly Hill, California: Sage Publications, 1974.

_____, "Community Agencies and Child Abuse: Labeling and Gatekeeping," Paper presented at the Conference on Recent Research on the Family, Sponsored by the Society for Research on Child Development, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1975a.

_____, "The Social Construction of Child Abuse," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, Vol. 43 (April), 1975b, pp. 363-371.

_____, "Demythologizing Child Abuse," The Family Coordinator, Vol. 25 (April), 1976a.

_____, "Methods for Studying Sensitive Family Topics," Paper presented to the Annual Meetings of the National Council on Family Relations, 1976b.

_____, "Problems in Defining and Labeling Child Abuse," Paper presented to the Study Group on Problems in the Prediction of Child Abuse and Neglect, Wilmington, Delaware, 1977.

_____, "Etiology of Violence: Overcoming Fallacious Reasoning in Understanding Family Violence and Child Abuse," Conference Proceedings: Child Abuse: Where Do We Go From Here?, Children's Hospital National Medical Center, Washington, D. C., 1978a.

_____, "Violence in the American Family," In, Violence in the Family, J. P. Martin (ed.), London: John Wiley and Sons, Ltd., 1978b.

_____, "The Violent Family," In, Critical Issues in Sociology, Scott E. McNall (ed.), New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1979.

Gil, D. G., Violence Against Children: Physical Child Abuse in the United States, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1970.

_____, "Violence Against Children in the Family," Journal of Marriage and the Family, Vol. 33 (November), 1971, pp. 637-648.

Giovannoni, J. M. and R. Becerra, "Trouble Begets Trouble: A Study of 949 Families Entering Protective Services Systems in Four California Counties," A Report to Social and Rehabilitative Services Office of Research and Demonstrations, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, University of California, School of Social Welfare, Los Angeles, California, 1977.

Giovannoni, J. M. and A. Billingsley, "Child Welfare Among the Poor: A Study of Parental Inadequacy in Three Ethnic Groups," Child Welfare, Vol. 49 (No. 4), 1970, pp. 196-204.

Helfer, R. E. and C. H. Kempe (eds), The Battered Child, Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1968.

Herrenkohl, R. C., "An Investigation of the Effects of a Multi-dimensional Service Program on Recidivism/Discontinuation of Child Abuse and Neglect," an unpublished preliminary report, (April), 1977.

Hill, R., "Generic Features of Families Under Stress," Social Casework, Vol. 39, 1958, pp. 139-150.

Hirschi, T., and H. C. Selvin, Delinquency Research: An Appriasal of Analytic Methods, New York: The Free Press, 1967.

Hunt, J. G. and L. L. Hunt, "Race, Daughters and Father-Loss: Does Absence Make the Girl Grow Stronger?" Social Problems, Vol. 25 (October), 1977, pp. 90-102.

Hunt, L. L. and J. G. Hunt, "Race and the Father-son Connection: The Conditional Relevance of Father Absence for the Orientations and Identities of Adolescent Boys." Social Problems, Vol. 23 (No. 1), 1975, pp. 35-52

Justice, B. and R. Justice, The Abusing Family, New York: Human Sciences Press, 1976.

Kadushin, A., Child Welfare Services, 2nd ed., New York: Macmillan Company, 1974.

Katz, S. N., When Parents Fail, Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 1971.

Kempe, C.H., "A Practical Approach to the Protection of the Abused Child and Rehabilitation of the Abusing Parent," Pediatrics, Vol. 51 (April), 1972, pp. 804-809.

Koos, E. L., Families in Trouble, New York: King's Crown Press, 1946.

Light, R. J. "Abused and Neglected Children: A Study of Alternative Policies," Harvard Education Review, Vol. 43 (November), 1973, pp. 556-598.

McCarthy, C., "Suffer the Little Children," Washington Post, March 27, 1973.

Mulligan, M., "An Investigation of Factors Associated with Violent Modes of Conflict Resolution in the Family," Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, Rhode Island, 1977.

Nagi, S. Z., Child Maltreatment in the United States: A Challenge to Social Institutions, New York: Columbia University Press, 1977.

Newberger, E. H., et al., "Pediatric Social Illness: Toward an Etiologic Classification," Pediatrics, Vol. 60, 1977, pp. 178-185.

Newberger, E. H. and R. Bourne, "The Medicalization and Legalization of Child Abuse," The American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, (In Press).

Paulsen, M. G., "The Legal Framework of Child Protection," Columbia Law Review, Vol. 66 (April), 1966.

Polansky, N. A. and C. Hally, and N. F. Polansky, State of Knowledge of Child Neglect: Final Report to the Community Service Administration, Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia, 1974.

Rein, M., "The Social Service Crisis," Transaction, Vol. 1 (May), 1964, pp. 3-6.

Rodham, H., "Children Under the Law," Harvard Educational Review, Vol. 43 (No. 4), 1973, p. 492.

Sherman, E. A., Service to Children in Their Own Homes: Its Nature and Outcomes, New York: Child Welfare League of America, 1973.

Spinetta, J. J. and D. Rigler, "The Child-abusing Parent: A Psychological Review," Psychological Bulletin, Vol. 77 (No. 4), 1972, pp. 296-304.

Steinmetz, S. K., "Violence Between Family Members: A Review of the Recent Literature," Marriage and Family Review, Vol. 1 (May/June), 1978, pp. 2-16.

Steinmetz, S. K. and M. A. Straus, Violence in the Family, New York: Dodd Mead and Company, 1974.

Straus, M. A., "Some Social Antecedents of Physical Punishment," Journal of Marriage and the Family, Vol. 33 (November), 1971, pp. 658-663.

Straus, M. A., R. J. Gelles and S. Steinmetz, Violence in the American Family, Garden City, New York: Anchor/Doubleday, 1979.

Sussman A. and S. J. Cohen, Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect: Guidelines for Legislation, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Ballinger Publishing Company, 1975.

Thomas, M. P., Jr., "Child Abuse and Neglect, Part I: Historical Overview, Legal Matrix, and Social Perspectives," North Carolina Law Review, Vol. 50, 1972, pp. 293, 330-3[illegible], 348-349.

U. S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population: 1970, Vol. I, Characteristics of the Population, Part II, Florida, Section 1, Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1973.

U. S. Bureau of the Census, County and City Data Book, Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1974.

U. S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1975. (98th edition), Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1977.

Webb, E. J., D. T. Campbell, R. D. Schwartz, and L. Sechrest, Unobstrusive Measures: Non-reactive Research in the Social Sciences, Chicago, Illinois: Rand McNally, 1966.

APPENDIX A

Sampling Procedures

7/29/77
Andrea Carr

Procedure for Drawing Florida Sample

I. If the child's name is to be deleted from the xeroxed forms sent to us:

A. Take a ruler and measure one (1) and 12/16ths of an inch into the first side of the first drawer of the master registry file. This card is the first card of the sample.

1. A case shall consist of all cards for the same child. Case number one, then, consists of all the cards, in both the master file and the unmatched files for that child.
2. Go forward and backward in the files until you have all cards on all children in that family.
3. For all cards for each child, write on the card a family number in the upper left-hand corner (for the first case write a "1," for the second case, a "2," etc.). For the first child within a family write a number "1" in the upper right-hand corner, a number "2" for the second child in that family, etc.
4. Finally, in the lower left-hand corner write in the relationship of the Reporter of abuse to the Abused, as specifically as possible. See attached diagram.

B. Then, move forward to the next family, family number 2 and child number 1. Repeat the procedure of finding all cards for all children in that family and writing in the family number, child number within that family, and the Reporter's relationship to the Abused. Repeat for family number three, number four and number five. Then Stop.

C. Go forward 2 inches in the files and select family number 6, going forward and backward in the files to get all children and all cards for those children. Repeat for families 7, 8, 9, and 10. Stop and move forward 2 inches in the files. Repeat.

D. When you have a large enough batch of cases to xerox, mark the spot in the files so that you can return to that spot after xeroxing.

E. White-out identifying information. Xerox 2 cards per page, but never xerox 2 cases on the same page.

F. Remove white-out tape and refile the batch of cases. Go to the point in the files you marked and begin selecting the next five families and children within those families.

II. If the child's name is to be left on the forms sent to us; we will code the family number and the child number, (A-3, above), but you will still have to write in the Reporter's relationship to the Abused, as in A-4, above. Otherwise, the procedure remains the same.

Family Number | Child Number

THE STATE OF FLORIDA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES
DIVISION OF FAMILY SERVICES

ild's Surname	First	Middle	Birthdate	Race/Sex	County

dress	Other Children in Danger?	Yes	No	Number

ther's Name	Address

ther's Name	Address

ild Lives With: Relationship and Name, if not Parent

me of Suspected Abuser	Address

me of Reporter	Position	Address	Date of Report

TURE OF ABUSE/MALTREATMENT:

Relationship of Reporter

ild Abuse Report
S-S-2035 (Rev 4/73) Green Copy to Local Office Yellow Copy to Juvenile Court White Card to State Office

THE STATE OF FLORIDA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES
DIVISION OF FAMILY SERVICES

hild's Surname (as submitted on 2035)	First	Middle	Birthdate	Race/Sex	County

hild's Surname (corrections)	First	Middle	Birthdate	Race/Sex	County

ates of Contacts and Detailed Summary of Situation:

se Plan: (60 days)

ild Abuse Report Form

Worker's Name and Date

APPENDIX B

Florida Coding Instructions

FLORIDA CODING INSTRUCTIONS

I. General Information

A. Definitions. A case, or observation, is a basic unit of analysis in any study. For the initial Florida coding a family will be this basic unit of analysis. However, the Florida reports are on children, filed alphabetically. Therefore, a family is defined by a child or, in some cases, two or more children of the same family on whom reports are filed.

Family composition may change during the time the family is in the system. In this case place reports on new children (children born after the family has once been in contact with the Abuse Registry) with their families. In most cases the alleged abused is a child (or all the children in the family), but it will be the child's family that becomes the case or observation--stapled together. Here, care must be exercised, as at times two children with a different last name are members of the same family. File cases of this type under the family name of the child first named on the initial or first report. Often the report will indicate multiple name families. One common method of doing this involves a note saying "see Boone." Always group families together, check out each case where multiple name families are indicated.

1) An initial or first report is that report that has first brought the child/family to the attention of the Abuse Registry or Child Protective Services. It is often, but not always, recorded on a 2035 form. At times, there are two or more initial reports. In this case the initial or first report is the one that comes earliest in real time, that is, the first time (year/month/day) the family entered/encountered the system. Often this will be called the allegation report

2) An investigation or follow-up report is the report made by a social worker, usually on a 2036 form. It is not always done this way. And, often there are more than one follow-up (investigation) reports.

The follow-up report is a report filed by a social worker after investigating (at least in principle) the report of alleged abuse.

In some cases these reports, both follow-up and initial, are continued onto another form because the social worker could not fit the report on one card--such an instance will be considered one report. If the investigation report indicates that several visits were made, or several attempts to contact the parties involved were made, this is still only one report. Repeated contact attempts will be recorded later.

3) The first child named on the first (earliest) allegation report for a family is defined as the child named in the initial report--the NIR child. Much of the information coded will pertain to the NIR child and therefore this definition/distinction is important.

B. Ordering the data (cases/observations).
1) Alphabetize the xerox data sheets representing families.

2) Within each family, order the data sheets according to the time the family entered the system (real time--year/month/day). This ordering must be from the earliest date to the most recent date.

C. Listing information for later coding. While ordering and alphabetizing the data keep the following lists:
1) The largest number of children within one family with an allegation (initial) report.

2) The largest number of children listed as members of one family.

3) The largest number of allegation (initial) reports for a particular family.

4) The largest number of investigation (follow-up) reports for a particular family.

5) The number of attempts by social workers to investigate a reported abuse case: here, list the largest number of successful attempts:* the largest number of unsuccessful attempts; and, the largest number of successful contacts where the family/caretaker or other parties involved refused to respond to the successful contact.

6) If you see a particularly unusual or confusing case, or one that you are not sure you can properly order, then keep a list of this also.

7) List all family names where contact dates are not readable.

It is important to note that on these lists you are looking for the largest number. Thus, in most cases, you will not need to look at the report any further than the child's name and contact dates. It is only in cases where the number of forms, children, incidents, etc., may exceed the last on your list(s) that you will need to note them. On these lists, place the child's name and the contact date.

*Attempts refers to making contact, by phone or in person, with any party(s) involved in the case investigation. These are noted on the data sheets as HV (home visit), TC (telephone call), FV (family visit).

II. Numbering the Cases -- Families

Number the cases (families)--CAREFULLY! Each family MUST have a unique number. Place this identification number (ID) in the top right hand corner of the xerox sheet(s)--on all xerox sheets for each family--and use indelible ink. Write the number carefully. Begin the numbering

with the first family and that family will be numbered 0001. The next family will be 0002, etc., until you reach 2890 (or whatever the last number is among the sample of families).

It is extremely important that only families have this unique ID number. This will be the first item entered on the coding sheets (see below). And, remember that a family may be one xerox sheet or several xerox sheets stapled together. Try to keep them properly stapled together.

III. General Coding Conventions

A. Data sheets are the xeroxed forms from Florida. Coding sheets (forms) are the green and white sheets (forms) on which you will enter the coded data. (A blank data sheet is included as Appendix F).

B. Attempt, in all cases, to code into one of the available categories. Try to minimize missing data.

One digit, and only one digit, may be entered in any column on the coding forms. These digits must be only "Ø" through "9" (zero, one, two... or nine).

C. Always, in items calling for two columns (digits), fill in both columns. That is, if the applicable code is between "Ø" and "9," fill in the code sheet as "ØØ" or "Ø9."

D. A zero must be recorded as "Ø" on the coding sheet; a seven must be recorded as "7" on the coding sheet; and, a one is recorded as "1." Also, carefully watch to make sure six is clearly distinguished from "Ø" (zero) and that "9" is clearly distinguished from one.

E. Missing data. The handling of missing data will depend on the number of digits in the item being coded. However, the principle in most cases is the same. A "9" will be used when there is no information available at all on the item being coded. An "8" will be used when the report (xerox) explicitly reports that the information called for in the item being coded is unknown, often written "unk" on the data sheets. A "7" will be used when the information being coded for a given item is available,but is not readable or decipherable. For a single digit item, these will be the codes. For a two digit item use "99" "88" or "77." For items such as dates and years it is not appropriate to use a combination of the missing data codes, nor is it appropriate to use "77" for undecipherable years. How to handle such situations is discussed in Section V, under items 5, 6, and 7.

A few items have special missing data codes and some items will never have missing data. These items are noted in both sections IV and V, below.

F. "Item", as used in the codebook, refers to the unique number assigned each variable. It is used only as a convenience for cross-referencing more detailed information on how to code particular variables. Most of the necessary information is found in section (IV). However, for some items, more detailed instructions are contained in section V,

Detailed Instructions for Selected Items.

G. WATCH THE LINES ON WHICH THE INFORMATION IS RECORDED ON THE REPORTS (xerox data sheets) CAREFULLY. These forms can be confusing. For example, you might by mistake record the "suspected abuser" as "who the child lives with" very easily. The setup of the forms does make this potential error very easy.

H. In theory, the 2036 investigation (follow-up) form has "corrected information" on it. Where inconsistencies arise, use the information on the 2036 or investigation (follow-up) form and assume this information to be the best available.

IV. Coding Instructions. Introduction

This, in conjunction with the four Appendices, is the section you will use most frequently for coding. More detailed instructions for the basic items to be coded are contained in Section V, and in the early coding process you will often need to refer to these.

The items in Section IV bear some brief explanation. Item and item number is a convenience for our use in the coding instructions and will be used by you for notes you keep on a general list of problematic coding items. Items with an asterisk have more detailed instructions in Section V.

VARIABLE NAME or VAR NAME and VARIABLE LABEL are present primarily for our convenience. However, you will use/record VAR NAME when making notes on your general list.

Description and Codes provides the code numbers to be recorded on the coding sheets. Fuller explanation of the codes for asterisked items can be found in Section V. Column tells you in which column you should record the code. Set is either FIRST, or FULL depending on whether the item being coded should use only the first allegation-investigation set or should use the full set of all allegation-investigation reports. And, the Missing Data column is simply a reminder for you that more detailed information on this is contained in Sections III, V, and Appendix E. Format is strictly for our use and should be ignored in the coding process.

V. Detailed Instructions for Selected Items

In this research we are attempting to understand, by initially coding information about a family's first contact with the Child Abuse Registry, the who's, why's, and how's of officially being reported for child abuse/neglect. And, we wish to begin to understand what happens once such contact is made. Hence, we are coding available demographic information on the NIR child and family, and some information on the reasons and processes through which they come in contact with the Abuse Registry, and what, after the initial contact, happens to them. But, we are also trying to understand the system itself, and are therefore trying to code, within the constraints of time and money, some information about the length of time a family is in contact with the official system, ways in which social workers operate, and the "final" (to the extent of reports

available to us) outcomes of contact with the system. The selected variables are meant to, as reliably and efficiently as possible, allow us to explore these issues.

The coding is necessarily complex and reliability is therefore an extremely important issue. This means you, the coder, must read, probably several times, the coding instructions. After you become familiar with these, Section IV and the appropriate Appendices will probably allow faster coding. But, the complexity is such that, at first especially, you will need to continually refer to this Section to help you decide the exact question being asked as you are in the process of coding a particular item. And, given the complexity of coding, we are requiring you to keep a general list, signed and dated, of any items for which you are unsure of the proper coding. This list should contain:

1) FAMILY ID number
2) VAR NAME
3) your chosen code; both the code number you chose and its written explanation (abbreviations allowed).

The coding instructions are now set up so you will be coding from each Appendix "in order." That is, the new variable arrangement should facilitate the complex use of Section IV and the several Appendices.

Most of the items (variables) apply only to the first allegation and the first investigation reports, or to the family situation at the time of these first reports. These reports, only, should be considered in coding items 8,10-29,31,33 and 36-40. And, this information should be coded only for the first child alleged as abused--the NIR child (the child named in the initial report). The exception to this rule is that subsequent reports may provide information that does not appear on the first reports and thereby may allow us to reduce "missing data." Use such information from other than the first reports to the extent that you can, without coding information pertaining to allegations and/or investigations other than the first ones. For example, if subsequent reports clarify the county, age of the NIR child, etc., then use this information to avoid missing data, as long as the information appears to be consistent with the situation at the time of the first allegation and first investigation reports. That is, read subsequent reports to try to eliminate missing data. But, remember we are, in the items listed above, coding the situation as it exists during the time of the first allegation and first investigation. Other variables which may be clarified by later reports include NOKIDS, BYRNG, BYROLD. Do not code children who were not at home at the time of the first report.

Some variables attempt to tap the time the family is in the system, and what happens to them--NOREPSAL, NOREPSIV, DATELREP, DATEAREP, DATEIREP,and the RECIDAB1 and RECIDAB2 variables. To code these you will need to read the full set of reports--allegation and investigation. Do so as quickly as possible. That is, read them looking for the "proper" codes for these variables, keeping in mind what is asked in these variables.

Your approach, then, to each case should be as follows. First, you should briefly examine the whole report to insure that the pages, where there are more than one, are in order. You should check to be sure that none of the reports are duplicates (written and typed) of each other .

Also, you should look briefly for information that we are coding that may be located in an area of the report where it is not ordinarily found. A quick check of the availability of certain "sets" of variables will help the coding proceed more quickly once you begin. Some "sets" of variables that can often be mentally "pre-coded" in your head before you begin are as follows:

a) items 3-7, number of reports and report dates
b) items 12-14, birth year of NIR child and of oldest and youngest child
c) items 17-18, name/address correspondence of mother/father/child
d) items 19-23, relationship variables
e) items 24-27, abuse types

In short, briefly look over the whole report for "stray" data (information).

ALWAYS CHECK THE "CORRECTED INFORMATION" ON THE INVESTIGATION REPORT(S), ESPECIALLY FOR COUNTY, RACE, SEX, NAME AND BIRTHDATE OF NIR CHILD.

The general missing data codes explained in Section II, E apply to almost all variables. However, there are two kinds of exceptions. Some items will not use the general missing data codes under any circumstances.

There will be no missing data for:

items 1-4, FAMILY, CARDNO, NOREPSAL, NOREPSIV
item 9, PRIORSUB
items 17-18, MFCNAME, MFCADD
item 30, EVERVALD
items 33-36 and 39-40, CONGRU, RECIDAB1, RECIDAB2, WATS, CODER, XEROX

For eleven variables, the missing data codes are different and contained in the coding instructions:

item 8, RESPONSE
items 19-27, CLIVE1 through ABUSESW2
item 28, VALIDSW

And for two variables, BYROLD and BYRYNG (items 13 and 14) the general missing data codes apply with the exception that the birth year can be 1977 and therefore "-1" (minus one) will be used for the more usual "77" missing data code. For these two variables "-1" will be the equivalent to "77."

Item-Specific Instructions

Items 3 and 4. Allegation and Investigation Reports. NOREPSAL and NOREPSIV. An initial or first report is that report that has first brought the child/family to the attention of the Abuse Registry or Child Protective Services--an allegation report. It is often, but not always, recorded on a 2035 form. At times, there are two or more allegation reports. In this case the initial or first report is the one that comes earliest in real time, that is, the first time (year/month/day) the family entered/encountered the system.

An investigation or follow-up report is a report made by a social worker, usually on a 2036 form. It is not always done this way. And,

often there is more than one investigation (follow-up) report. The investigation report is a report filed by a social worker after investigating (at least in principle) the report of alleged abuse.

In some cases these reports, both investigation and allegation, are continued onto another form because the social worker could not fit the report on one card--such an instance will be considered one report. If the investigation report indicates that several visits were made, or several attempts to contact the parties involved were made, this is still only one report.

If there are either more than nine allegation reports or more than nine investigation reports, then code these items as "9." The code "9" means, then, nine or more reports. On your general list record the FAMILY ID NUMBER, VAR NAME,and the actual number of either allegation reports or investigation reports if there are ten or more.

There are no missing data for these two variables.

Items 5-7, Report Dates. Unless there is some date on the investigation report, do not assume the 60 day investigation was carried out. It may be that no investigation was carried out. Instead, if there is no information on the report indicating the date of the investigation (either in the block provided for it or among the social worker's notes), then code this information as totally missing data--999999.

In cases of multiple reports, and when the order of them seems obscure (for example, the investigation report appears to refer to some allegation report other than the first one provided) then code it as best you can (quickly--but with reasonable caution) and make a note of the ID number, VAR NAME and item on your general list. Eileen and I will look at it and try to determine what to do with it. But, we do want you to attempt to code it as you see fit.

The last report date is the last (latest in real years) report on the family, whether an allegation or an investigation report. We are trying to, at least roughly, determine the length of time the family has been in contact with the Protective Services system. If the last report has no date (and you "know" it is the last because it follows, in the sense of continuity of facts, another earlier report),code the last date we have.

If the date you code is not the report date (for example, it is a "contact" date mentioned in the content of the report), then list the FAMILY ID number, VAR NAME and item number on your general list. Note that you have used a "contact" date to code the report date.

Item 8. RESPONSE Time taken to respond to allegation. Here we wish to code, where possible, the smallest amount of time (number of days, weeks, months) between the allegation of abuse and the social worker's attempt to take action on the case (the first such attempt). This will often be indicated on the investigation report by a date for a home visit (H.V.), telephone call (T.C.), or other similar notation. If no such "intervening" date is available, use the date of the first investigation report.

If you use the investigation report date, make a note of this on your general list, recording FAMILY ID, VAR NAME and item number.

Compare the "first attempt date" with the first allegation report date (if both dates can be determined) and code as follows:

0=investigation began the same day as the allegation of abuse.
1=investigation began one day after the allegation of abuse.
2=investigation began less than one week after the allegation of abuse.
3=investigation began one to two weeks after the allegation of abuse.
4=investigation began within one month after the allegation of abuse.
5=investigation began more than one month after the allegation of abuse.
6=allegation date missing/unreadable.
7=investigation date missing/unreadable.
8=allegation and investigation dates missing/unreadable.
9=allegation or investigation report is missing.

These codes are found in Section IV in abbreviated form. And, obviously the "general" missing data codes do not apply.

Item 9. PRIORSUB, Indication of Prior or Subsequent Contact. This variable is intended to find those cases where it is apparent that the family has had prior or subsequent contact with the Child Abuse Registry, but we do not have reports to indicate (or rather to code) this.

Usually this variable will be coded "6" or "no prior or subsequent contact apparent." However, if the sequence of reports we have begins with an investigation report, then assume that there was a prior allegation report and code the variable that "yes, a prior allegation report is likely" or "1." If the sequence of reports ends with an allegation report, or if the investigation report is the last report and it seems likely there will be another investigation report, later, on the family, then code this variable as "yes, a subsequent investigation is likely," or "2." In the unlikely event that the sequence of reports we have starts with an investigation report which appears to imply a previous allegation which we do not have and the sequence ends with an allegation report or an investigation report that clearly implies a further investigation will be forthcoming, then code this variable as "yes, a prior allegation report and a subsequent investigation report is likely," or "3." If none of the above apply (except "no"), but the report explicitly mentions that the family has a history of alleged abuse, or of contact with the Abuse Registry, these, too, will be coded (see codes below).

This variable will have no missing data.

Codes:

1=yes, a prior allegation report is likely
2=yes, a subsequent investigation report is likely
3=yes, a prior allegation and a subsequent investigation report is likely
4=no, but a history of alleged abuse is explicitly mentioned in the report
5=no, but prior knowledge and/or contact with the family is explicitly mentioned in the report.
6=no other reports apparent.

Item 10. COUNTY, First Allegation Report. Record the county from the first allegation report. If the name of the county is omitted from the first allegation report and only a number is supplied, check all the other reports for a county name. If there is still only a number, then code that number minus 10, but keep on your general list the FAMILY ID number, and the VAR NAME. We will further check to be sure the county number so recorded is correct. Also, if you are forced to take the county (name or number) from other than the first allegation report, record such instances on your general list: FAMILY ID, VAR NAME.

Item 11. NOKIDS, Number of children in family. Count all siblings mentioned in the first allegation report and any subsequently mentioned in the first investigation report. If other siblings are mentioned in subsequent reports, and are old enough to have been members of the family at the time of the first allegation and investigation, count these siblings, also. Be sure to include the NIR child. That is, we are coding the total number of children in the family who are living at home at the time of the first allegation and not the number of"children in danger"as the social worker's form indicates. There is no age limit on these siblings (or step-siblings).

We want to code the number of children who are members of the family and living at home--and this will, of course, be as accurate, and only as accurate, as the social worker's report. Therefore, to clarify this possible source of inaccuracy the coding should proceed as follows:

a) If it seems clear that the social worker has listed all children in the family, then code NOKIDS as the absolute number of siblings plus the NIR child. That is, if there are two siblings, code NOKIDS as "3."
b) If there is clearly more than one child, but the largest number of siblings appears unclear, then code the number of children as two through nine (depending on the number of all children in the family and precede the code with a "3." Thus, for "at least three children in the family" code NOKIDS as "33," etc. If there should be "at least ten children in the family," code NOKIDS as "41," "at least eleven" as "42," etc.
c) If it is clear that there are siblings, but there is no indication of how many, then code NOKIDS as "32."

The usual missing data codes apply to this variable.

Items 12, 13, and 14. Birthdate of NIR child and Birth Years. Except where otherwise noted, information to be coded about a specific child will be the information about the child named on the first allegation report (the NIR child). Where more than one child is so named, use the child first named. If it is not clear which child is the first named or listed, choose the child randomly. To be random, select the child whose name is alphabetically earliest or latest. To determine whether to use the direct or inverse alphabetical order, flip a coin--fairly.

In the odd case where the report is not about the NIR child, make a note of this on your general list and proceed to code using the child for whom information is available as the NIR child. Do so for all subsequent NIR child items.

If only the age in years is listed for the primary (NIR) child, then code the birthdate using only the year and "zero-fill" the other columns. To get the year, subtract the age of the NIR or primary child from the year of the initial (first) allegation report. If two ages are given, e.g. "9-10 years old," use the first given.

Where there is only one child in the family, record that child's birthdate (BIRTH, item 12) and the year of his birth for item 13--BYROLD. Code item 14 (BYRYNG) as "missing." If there are siblings but their ages or birth years are not given, then code items 13 and 14 (BYROLD and BYRYNG) as "missing."

Where the whole date (year/month/day) is called for, if the year is undecipherable or cannot be figured out from the rest of the report, code the whole date as undecipherable--777777. If the year is available, but the other information is not, code the year and "zero-fill" the month and day columns. If year and month are available, code these and "zero fill" the day columns. Do not code year and day if month is missing--code only year and "zero-fill" the month and day columns.

If the year cannot be figured out, where the whole date is called for, code the whole date as undecipherable--777777. Where only the year is to be coded, undecipherable or missing data will be coded as "-1", NOT as 77. This is to allow the year 1977 to be coded as 77 without confusing it with missing data.

On these items it is important to remember that the youngest child in a family is the one born in the latest (real time) year.

IN CODING THE BIRTH YEAR OF THE NIR CHILD BE SURE TO CHECK THE INVESTIGATION REPORT FOR CORRECTED INFORMATION ON THE BIRTHDATE. USE THIS CORRECTED INFORMATION IF THERE IS A DISCREPANCY.

Items 17 and 18. MFCNAME AND MFCADD, Name and Address Congruence. This variable will partially code the family situation of the NIR child. We are trying to distinguish "intact" families from families that are in one way or other not the "normal" mother, father and child all living together, all with the same surname. And, as it is quite possible for a child to live in such a "normal" family without living with his/her "natural" parent(s), we will code this variable using, as far as possible, the social worker's judgement of the "natural" father and mother. To do this we will assume the social worker's judgement of the "natural" father and mother is that which is recorded in the appropriate boxes of the first allegation report. Thus, if the social worker records the child's stepfather, for example, assume it is the social worker's judgement that that person is the child's "natural" (normal) father UNLESS THE SOCIAL WORKER SPECIFICALLY RECORDS THE FATHER AS "STEPFATHER." In that case record the mother/father/child name congruence as it is ("same," if child does have the same name as the stepfather, or possibly "mother, child same, father differs") and code item 19 as the child lives with the mother and stepfather, code "0?."

The codes for these two variables, then, are as follows:

1=all are the same
2=mother and father are the same, child differs
3=mother and child are the same, father differs

4=father and child are the same, mother differs
5=none are the same
6=mother and father are the same, child is unknown
7=mother and child are the same, father is unknown
8=father and child are the same, mother is unknown
9=all are unknown
0=one or both parents are deceased

If either parent is deceased, code item 17, MFCNAME, as "0"--one or both parents deceased. For item 18, MFCADD, code the address for the deceased parent as "differs." On your general list note FAMILY ID, VAR NAME and indicate which parent(s) is deceased.

Note that code "0" does not exist for item 18, MFCADD. Also, the general "missing data" codes DO NOT APPLY to these two items.

IF THE FATHER AND MOTHER ARE DIVORCED AND THE FATHER IS STILL LIVING AT HOME (the names and address would, in this case indicate an "intact" family and not reflect the actual family situation) CODE THE MOTHER AND FATHER AS IF THE MOTHER HAD RESUMED USE OF HER MAIDEN NAME, that is, code item 17 as "4" and item 18 as "1."

Items 19-23. Variables Expressing Relationships to NIR child. Five variables use the codes provided in Appendix B: CLIVE1, CLIVE2, ABUSERAL, ABUSERIV, and REPORTER. The list of codes in Appendix B is long and complex, but there is an inherent order to it as shown in the general groupings at the left of Table 1.

These are not all categories of people "related" to the NIR CHILD. Rather, some of these codes are special codes for some of the variables being coded using this Appendix in instances where no "relationship" happens to apply. Therefore, Appendix B provides for such cases.

Items 19 and 20. CLIVE1 and CLIVE2, NIR Child's Residence. In coding these two variables we are attempting to accurately describe whom the NIR child lives with--his actual "family" situation. In most cases it will be mother, father, or both parents. However, to be accurate, many of these children live in home situations that include other relatives, and sometimes other people not related to the child, or do not live with either parent, but with other relatives and/or non-relatives.

Most of the common situations will be found in Appendix B as one code number. However, sometimes a child will live with a combination of people not specified in Appendix B. Thus two variables are used to code (and describe) the child's living situation--CLIVE1 in columns 46-47 and CLIVE2 in columns 48-49. In the event that there is no one code number that accurately describe's the child's home situation, the second variable may be used to specify the next "most important" person(s) the child lives with. To the extent that a single code number does specify the child's home situation, do NOT use other codes (CLIVE2) to further (or also) specify it. Under no circumstance will one person be assigned more than one "relationship code" for variables CLIVE1 and CLIVE2. Choose the codes that are most specific and/or most accurate. And, if one code number (e.g. parents--01) is sufficient, then "zero-fill" CLIVE2 (columns 48-49).

Finally, for CLIVE1 and CLIVE2, do not code siblings living "at home." We are able to determine this aspect of the NIR child's situation from another variable--N_IDS. Brother(s) and/or sister(s) are included in Appendix B for use (with these variables, at least) only if the NIR child has left the parental home to live with a brother or sister who has also left the parental home.

If the NIR child is living alone, code "77" will apply.

Item 21. Alleged Abuser. Most often the alleged abuser will be one or both of the parents, another relative or a caretaker. However, the alleged abuser may be a babysitter, neighbor, or even a stranger. Appendix B provides for most such situations.

When the alleged abuser is marked in the "appropriate" box on the allegation report, code this person (relationship to the NIR child) from Appendix B. If two or more people are so named, and if Appendix B does not include one code number to specify them both, choose the "most abusive" and add to your general list FAMILY ID, VAR NAME, and the "additional" alleged abuser(s).

Item 22. Abuser After Investigation by the Social Worker. The suspected abuser after investigation is that person or persons whom the social worker believes to be the abuser after the social worker's investigation. It is what the social worker believes, as best you can determine from reading the investigation report and independent of what the social worker specifies (if anything) about the validity or disposition of the case. Again, this will often be the parent(s) and/or caretaker(s). However, to find this will require "objectively" reading the social worker's first investigation report. And, the suspected abuser need not be the same person as the alleged abuser, although this may often be the case.

Two special codes are provided for the variable ABUSERIV--suspected abuser: 1)no abuser; and 2) custody conflict. After investigation the social worker may find there is no abuse and, therefore, no abuser. And often the social worker suspects the allegation of abuse results from an intra-family quarrel over custody of the child, hence the code "custody conflict." However, if it is clear that the social worker believes the apparent custody conflict is really a result of abuse/neglect on the part of a real or potential caretaker, then code that person as the suspected abuser after investigation. In other words, use the code "custody conflict" only when it seems the social worker believes the allegations of abuse/neglect were "made up" only as an attempt to gain custody of the child because a person (usually the one charging abuse/neglect) believes the child is not properly cared for, or would be better off with them. The same line of reasoning applies when using the code which represents "parent causing trouble for the parent without custody."

Unlike alleged abuser (item 21), the code "no abuser" is a quite legitimate code for the suspected abuser after investigation. However, there will be a very few cases where, for one reason or another a case comes to the attention of the Abuse Registry where there is no abuser, even an alleged abuser. For example, sometimes the Registry will receive an "obvious" hoax call alleging abuse and all calls they receive must be recorded. Hence, in a very few cases there will be no abuser for the

variable ABUSERAL, but this will be a rare situation. Finally, as in the alleged abuser, the code "NIR child" should not be used for the variable ABUSERIV.

As in item 21, if the suspected abuser after investigation is more than one person, and if none of the codes in Appendix B specify these two or more people, then code the first named or the social worker's most emphasized abuser. Make a note on your general list of the FAMILY ID, VAR NAME and the additional "abusers." If the first named, or the most emphasized abuser is "unreadable," use the other suspected abuser if that one is readable and add FAMILY ID, VAR NAME, and the appropriate codes to your general list.

Item 27. Reporter of Abuse. The Florida Child Abuse Registry, while legally bound to not disclose the identity of the reporter of child maltreatment, agreed to supply us with some information on the relationship of that reporter to the child he or she alleged to be maltreated. Specifically, they agreed to tell us if the reporter was a relative (although not what the specific relationship was), a neighbor, a friend, or a member of one of the several professional groups likely to report child maltreatment. These groups include medical personnel, police, public and private social workers, and school personnel.

Thus, the information you need to code the variable REPORTER will be written in on the xeroxed data sheets, near the name and position of the reporter (which will be blacked out). In this manner the actual identity of the reporter will remain confidential while we will still be able to determine, to some degree, the association between the reporter and the alleged maltreated. Use Appendix B to code this item.

In accordance with Florida law, any reporter who is said to be a relative of the NIR child will be coded as such - - code 35 is applicable here. Since the law also specifies that many professionals involved with families and children must report suspected cases of child maltreatment, we have codes for several of the major institutionalized professional groups who work with children. These are organized in major groupings representing the medical/health social service systems, the schools, the legal/law enforcement social service systems, the clergy, and social workers. A special set of "residual" categories is provided which consists of strangers, concerned citizens and anonymous reporters. Often, the reporter of abuse will be a friend or a neighbor. These codes are also valid codes for coding this variable.

In the unlikely case that there are two or more reporters of alleged abuse code the first named and make a note on your general list of FAMILY ID, VAR NAME, and the additional reporters.

Remember, if you are at all unsure on how to code this item (or any other) put the usual information on your general list.

Items 24-27. Types of Abuse/Neglect--Appendix C. Type of abuse will be coded four times. First, the seriousness of alleged abuse reported on the first allegation report will be coded two times, in columns 56-57 and in columns 58-59. Second, the social worker's "objective" assessment of seriousness of abuse will be coded twice; in columns 60-61 and again in columns 62-63.

A particular child may be reported (or found by the social worker) to have experienced several forms of "abuse." Code the "most serious"

in the first set of two columns provided for alleged abuse. Code the next most "serious" type of abuse that is alleged in the second set of two columns, columns 58-59. Code the "most serious" type of abuse that the social worker finds after the "objective" assessment deriving from his/her investigation in the third set of two columns, columns 60-61. Finally, code the next most "serious" type of abuse "objectively found" by the social worker in the final set of two columns, columns 62-63. In some cases only one type of abuse is mentioned in either the allegation report and/or the investigation report. In this case, do not use the columns provided for the "next most serious" type of abuse, whether it is the alleged abuse or the social worker's objective assessment after investigation. That is, "zero-fill" columns 58-59 and/or 62-63.

Code abuse types relevant to the NIR child. Often abuse of their children will be mentioned--make a note of these on your general list. To clarify, a report alleging medical neglect, truancy and custody conflict should omit truancy if the NIR child is not of school age.

Try to code specific,overt behaviors. Code the most serious and the next most serious. But, "seriousness" should be tempered with relevance, so that we are coding the best view of the child's total family situation, given two types of abuse that we have the "room" to code. Therefore, if the second most serious type of abuse is very "close" to the first and within the same general category of Appendix C, then select the next most serious not in the category, if one exists. And, this "substitute" selection should be the third most "serious" of all (or any) forms of abuse mentioned. Yet, even this rule must be loosened a bit: if there are two quite different forms of physical abuse mentioned, then code both of these--we are quite interested in physical abuse, and somewhat less interested in other forms of abuse and/or neglect. As an example, if severe bruises, "08," and severe cuts, "09," apply, do not code TYPEAB1 and TYPEAB2 as "0809," if say, parental drunkenness, "41," or parental expectations excessively high, "37," or truancy, "52," also apply. In these three instances code "0841," or "0837," or "0852." If, however, severe bruises and skull fracture apply--even though truancy also may apply--then code TYPEAB1 and TYPEAB2 as "0508." And, make a note on your general list of the additional abuse types that apply.

IF YOU ARE AT ALL UNSURE AS TO WHAT ABUSE TYPES TO CODE, record FAMILY ID, VAR NAME, and the codes in question on your general list. However, code those items where you are unsure.

The codes for "seriousness" of abuse are provided in Appendix C. The codes are to some extent arranged in order (arbitrarily, yes) of seriousness. However, sexual abuse is listed in a category much further down on the list than is warranted by its seriousness. If sexual abuse is alleged, (TYPEAB1 and TYPEAB2), or is the "objective" assessment of the social worker after investigation (ABUSESW1 or ABUSESW2), then select a code from those listed under "sexual abuse" unless codes "01," "02," or "03" also apply. In this case, code sexual abuse in the second set of columns provided--those for "second most serious abuse" (alleged or investigated). If codes "01" through "03" apply to both the "most serious" and the "next most serious" type of abuse,

then use codes "01" through "03" in the two sets of columns provided and add to your general list the FAMILY ID, VAR NAME and codes that also apply for the case in question. That is, when two forms of extreme abuse and sexual abuse are alleged and/or "found" by the social worker, code the extreme abuse only, but list the sexual abuse on your general list.

A note on our use of "seriousness" and "relevance" is in order. First, and foremost, seriousness means physical injury, intentional or otherwise, to the child. However, even within this definition, the more extreme the physical harm to the child, the more serious we consider the abuse. After those cases where there is actual physical injury to the child, seriousness refers to the risk--through acts of commission or of omission--of physical injury to the child. Hence, the second major heading is "medical neglect, potential physical risk." From that point on in Appendix C, the meaning of seriousness becomes more hazy. At this point "relevance" of abuse takes on part of its meaning. As we are recording only two types of either alleged or "found" abuse, we do wish to encompass the total situation, whether alleged or actual (that is, after investigation). Thus, if one form of physical (the more serious form of abuse, as we see it) abuse is sufficient to indicate the seriousness of alleged or investigated abuse, then we wish the next most relevant form of behavior (on the part of the alleged abuser/investigated abuser, or on the part of the child) to be recorded so that we might have a better view of the total situation. However, if there is so much and/or so many different forms of "serious physical abuse," then we see that as more relevant than the more total view we could record by going to one of the other categories. If you are at all unsure about this, record FAMILY ID, VAR NAME and the codes in question on your general list.

Codes "18," "19," and "20" should be used only in cases where this type of neglect poses a serious physical risk to the primary NIR child. If such "neglect" is more general and less serious, and if no other form of "serious" abuse or neglect applies, use code "29." Use code "42" only if such parental fighting is severe.

Code abuse types from the first allegation report and the first investigation report. If the first investigation report does not apply to the first allegation report, then code items 26-27, ABUSESW1 and ABUSESW2, as missing. If the first investigation report only partially refers to the first allegation report, then use only that part dealing with the first allegation.

Never assume the child is to blame, or is provoking parental behavior. Code such cases (where it appears to you that the child is to blame) as some form of parental (caretaker) inability to handle/cope with the child or situation.

The missing data codes for these four variables--TYPEAB1, TYPEAB2, ABUSESW1 and ABUSESW2--are as follows:

99=no information available at all
98=report explicitly states no information available
(an unlikely occurrence)
97=unreadable/undecipherable
96=first investigation report does not address the first allegation of abuse/neglect (for ABUSESW1 only)
00=only one type of abuse/neglect is reported
(for TYPEAB2 and ABUSESW2 only)

Some of the codes in Appendix C have asterisks. The asterisk by code "42" is explained above. The asterisk by code "85" is only to remind you to try not to use this code at all. And those by codes "50," "66," "24," and "73" are again reminders to try to avoid using these codes, if possible. Other codes asterisked mean:

code 19--do not use this if codes "30-32" explain the situation better.
code 22--use when the parents could and should have sought treatment. Use codes "23" and "24" if such specificity can be determined. That is, codes "23" and "24" are preferred over "22."
code 36--a social worker's term. Use it when found on a report.
code 62--serious sexual activity between the child and a member of his family, not necessarily intercourse.
code 63--again, serious sexual activity.
codes 80,81--Use 80 when the social worker knows the family has moved, otherwise use code "81."
code 85--try not to use this code at all.

Item 28. VALIDSW, Social Worker's Finding of Validity. Often you will not find "valid " or "invalid" on the investigation report--the report on which you will be looking for this information to code VALIDSW (in conjunction with the alleged abuse). You must judge, as objectively as possible, whether the social worker's investigation has revealed that the alleged abuse actually occurred. And, it is critical to understand that the coding of validity is complex in that the categories of this variable are not mutually exclusive. Therefore, you must select not only the appropriate code, but sometimes the best code of several that may apply.

The codes are arranged so that if a smaller (lower) number applies, you should select that code number in preference to a larger code number, further down on the list. The codes are as follows:

1=TYPEAB1 and TYPEAB2 are valid
2=TYPEAB1 is valid
3=TYPEAB2 is valid
4=a less serious type of abuse/neglect was valid
5=a more serious type of abuse/neglect was valid
6=validity of the alleged abuse/neglect is not clear, but there appears to have been some abuse/neglect
7=validity of the alleged abuse/neglect is not clear, but there appears to have been no abuse neglect
8=all allegations of abuse/neglect were invalid
9=the investigation provides no information to code this (reasons for this possibility include the social worker's failure to address the issue, the lack of information which would allow the use of another code, or the inability of the social worker to make contact with the family--i.e., if the family moved or if the wrong address was given)
0=the investigation report is undecipherable or does not exist

To clarify, if both types of alleged abuse you coded (TYPEAB1 and TYPEAB2) actually happened (as far as you can tell from the social worker's investigation report) then you will code this variable as "1," or "TYPEAB1 and TYPEAB2 were both valid," even though codes "2" and "3" are

also "true." If codes "1" through "3," do not apply, then it is preferable if you can use either codes "4" or "5" rather than code "8." Similarly, codes "6" and "7" are preferrable to code "8." However, it the social worker's investigation report CLEARLY states that the allegations are invalid, then use code "8," even if you may feel the investigation report indicates selection of codes "4-7" might be more appropriate. You are coding whether specific, overt behaviors occurred, even if they were unintentional, accidental, etc. Also, it is not necessary for you to see them as abuse and/or neglect. The question is "did they occur?" "Did the social worker believe they occurred?"

List any cases where you are unsure on your general list, including FAMILY ID, VAR NAME, and your selected code.

There are NO MISSING DATA CODES on this variable.

Item 29. PHYAB, Evidence of Gil Definition of Abuse. While coding overt behaviors that are alleged as child abuse is obviously difficult (as Appendix C attests) defining child abuse conceptually is even more difficult. However, David Gil (1970) has attempted to define physical child abuse. We wish to code, for the first allegation-investigation set on a child or family whether or not physical child abuse occurred, using as nearly as possible, Gil's definition. We wish to do this for the potential of comparison of our Florida sample data with data Gil has collected.

In order to do this, however, you need to be familiar with not only Gil's definition of physical child abuse, but also the complexities of applying it to the "real life situations" as reported in the social worker's reports. Further, you must be the judge of whether or not physical child abuse occurred. And, you must do so using the information included in the social worker's report that is "factual" about the alleged incident of abuse.

Importantly, you must take all "objective" information included in both the allegation and the investigation reports and decide, INDEPENDENTLY OF THE SOCIAL WORKER'S FINDINGS OF VALIDITY AND/OR THE PLANNED DISPOSITION OF THE CASE, whether or not it is likely that physical child abuse, as defined by Gil, occurred.

To help in this task, I will quote, both directly and extensively from Gil starting with his definition of physical child abuse:

> Physical abuse of children is the intentional, nonaccidental use of physical force, or intentional, nonaccidental acts of omission, on the part of a parent or other caretaker interacting with a child in his care, aimed at hurting, injuring, or destroying that child.
> (Gil, 1970:6)

Then,

> ...many investigators constructed definitions of child abuse in terms of the observed effects of an attack on a child, such as injuries sustained by him, rather than in terms of the motivation and behavior of the attacking person. Such definitions disregard the motivational and behavioral dynamics of perpetrators and result in vagueness, since the outcomes of violent, abusive acts depend not only on the perpetrator's behavior, but also on the victim's reaction to the perpetrator's behavior and on environmental and chance circumstances...

Quotations from Violence Against Children: Physical Child Abuse in the United States, by D. G. Gil, are used through permission by Harvard University Press.

> In an effort to minimize ambiguity in defining physical abuse of children...[a] conceptual definition was developed...based on the behavior of perpetrators, rather than on the variable consequences of such behavior...."
>
> (Gil, 1970:5)

It is that definition, that of Gil, that you are trying to apply to the reported situation in the first allegation-investigation set. However, other comments by Gil help in clarifying how he arrived at his definition, and why some acts which you may (or may not) consider a part of that definition are included or excluded.

Thus, some sexual abuse is excluded:

> ...a child who is abused sexually without resistance is not a victim of physical abuse as defined here. The exclusion of pure sexual abuse from the definition of physical child abuse is based on the assumption that perpetrators of sexual abuse are motivated differently from perpetrators of physical abuse. The former seem to seek primarily sexual self-gratification, while the latter seem primarily intent upon hurting the child.
>
> (Gil, 1970:6)

And, "neglect" must be intentional and non-accidental. Also, note that the caretaker is quite specifically defined.

> The inclusion in the definition of physical child abuse of intentional acts of omission, such as intentional withholding of food, may also lead to certain diagnostic difficulties, since acts of omission which are due to neglect, ignorance, or lack of resources may produce physical consequences similar or indentical to those resulting from acts of intentional omission. Here, too, however, the difficulty in differentiation is not conceptual but merely operational, and with proper examination of specific incidents it is usually possible to establish the presence or absence of intentional elements in acts of omission.
>
> The term "caretaker" in the definition refers to a person who functioned in a de facto child-caring role for the child whom he abused. The child-caring role is not defined quantitatively by duration in time but qualitatively by the nature of the constellation existing between the child and the person at the time of the abusive incident. This constellation involves elements of actual or presumed responsibility for maintaining or guarding the child's well-being and welfare.
>
> (Gil, 1970:7)

Further, there are other problematic areas in attempting to apply Gil's definition.

> The foregoing definition seems sound conceptually, but is not completely satisfactory as an operational definition, for it may not always be

possible to differentiate between intentional and accidental behavior. It should be noted also that the presence of intentional elements in the behavior of perpetrators does not imply complete absence of chance elements. On the contrary, many incidents of child abuse may involve a mix of intentional and chance elements and, at times, it may be impossible to determine the exact role played in a given incident by chance and that played by intentional behavior. An added difficulty is the fact that behavior which appears to be accidental may be determined in part by unconsciously intentional elements. Thus, while the boundary between pure accidents and physical abuse can be drawn clearly on a conceptual level, it may, at times, be difficult to differentiate between them without thorough examination of the motivations that underlie manifest behavior in given incidents.

(Gil, 1970:6)

But, there is a clear reduction of ambiguity:

> Apart from the difficulty of ascertaining the presence of elements of intentionality, which, by definition, constitute a sine qua non of child abuse, the definition suggested here reduces ambiguity by <u>including all use of physical force and all acts of omission aimed at hurting, injuring, or destroying a child, irrespective of the degree of seriousness of the act, the omission, and/or the outcome</u>.
>
> (Gil, 1970:6)--emphasis added

And, an exclusion of cultural elements <u>as part</u> of the definition:

> Most societies, including American society, with the possible exception of certain American Indian tribes, have not developed absolute cultural taboos and legal sanctions against the use of physical force against children by adults. Not only is such use of physical force not prohibited, but it is even encouraged in specified contexts by many societies.
>
> (Gil, 1970:8)

> It is also reflected in cultural values, traditions, and customs, and in actual child-rearing practices throughout the United States, all of which uphold the discretional right of parents and other caretakers of children to use a "reasonable amount of physical force" in disciplining children. It is finally reflected in the conflicting and ambiguous attitudes, interpretations and actions of professionals and agencies in the fields of health, education, welfare, religion and law enforcement when dealing with issues and problems in the relationship of parents and children, and more specifically in the just-mentioned difficulties concerning the conceptual definition of physical abuse of children and appropriate ways of dealing with it.
>
> (Gil, 1970:10)

One may therefore conclude that a certain measure of physical abuse of children is a fully sanctioned aspect of the current stage of cultural development of American society. There exist significant

differences between various segments of the American population concerning the extent of physical abuse of children which is considered appropriate, and which is actually practiced. In spite of such differences, however, it cannot be denied that some measure of violence against children is patterned into the child-rearing philosophies and practices of nearly all Americans. In view of this situation the existing difficulties surrounding the conceptual definition of child abuse should surprise no one, for a definition, to be valid, cannot be based upon subjective judgments of the severity of observed effects. Because of these difficulties in defining physical abuse, it is a very frustrating task to obtain accurate figures on the incidence and prevalence of this phenomenon. Estimates of various investigators range from a few thousand to several million incidents per year.

(Gil, 1970:11-12)

Finally, a theoretical justification for Gil's quite inclusive definition:

The preceding argument suggests that sociocultural and psychodynamic conceptualizations of child abuse do not negate but supplement each other. The phenomenon of physical abuse of children can, therefore, be conceived to range over a wide spectrum. At one end are incidents involving neither personality deviance nor environmental stress. The perpetrators in these incidents are normal individuals who are acting in a manner approved by their culture while disciplining children in their care. The undesirable outcome of their actions may be due to chance factors, but the dynamic source underlying their behavior is a culturally determined attitude. On the other extreme end of the spectrum are incidents involving individuals who suffer from various types of personality disorders and whose abusive attacks on children in their care are triggered by these disorders in various combinations with environmental stress factors.

(Gil, 1970:13)

Item 30. EVERVALD. Was Abuse or Neglect Ever Valid for the Family. In coding this variable we are trying to find out two things: a) for each family was there ever an allegation report which was determined as a valid report of abuse or neglect? and b) once in the system, what patterns of valid and invalid reports emerge?

It is important to understand the difference between allegations and allegation reports. Each report may contain one or many allegations of abuse and/or neglect. VALIDSW will code the validity of the allegations made in the first allegation report. EVERVALD deals with the validity of subsequent reports. Therefore, in this item we are returning to dealing with the entire set of reports, as opposed to previous variables which dealt with only the first allegation and the first investigation reports. If any abuse and/or neglect is found as a result of a subsequent allegation report, then that report will be considered valid for the purpose of this variable.

The validity of cases--families--with only one allegation report is adequately covered by the variable VALIDSW. For these cases code the variable EVERVALD as "1." The complete codes for EVERVALD are as follows:

1=only one allegation report exists
2=all allegation reports are valid
3=the first allegation report is valid, and at least one more (but not all) report is valid
4=the first allegation report is valid, the rest are invalid
5=the first allegation report is invalid, at least one more is valid
6=none of the allegation reports are valid
7=the first allegation report is valid, enough of the rest are uncertain, so codes 2,3 and 4 cannot be used
8=the first allegation report is invalid, enough of the rest are uncertain, so codes 5 and 6 cannot be used
9=the first allegation report is uncertain, at least one subsequent report is valid
0=the first allegation report is uncertain, none of the others can be determined valid, or the first is unsure and the rest are invalid.

The term validity, as used in coding this variable, is nearly identical in meaning to its use in the variable VALIDSW. Essentially, what we are asking you to do is to assess the validity of each allegation report in families with multiple allegation reports. Each report that would have received a value of 1,2,3,4 or 5 for the variable VALIDSW, if it had been the first allegation report for that family, will be considered a "valid" report for the purposes of coding EVERVALD. In other words, you are trying to determine if each subsequent allegation report indicates that any abuse or neglect was valid for the family. This assessment can, and must, be made without using the process you used before for determining the variables TYPEAB1 and TYPEAB2 and ABUSESW1 and ABUSESW2. The type of abuse and/or neglect is irrelevant. This variable is meant to tap whether or not abuse and/or neglect ever existed in multiple-allegation families.

After determining the "validity" for each allegation report for a family, we ask that you find the EVERVALD code which describes the pattern of valid/invalid reports. This is the code you will assign the family in question for the variable EVERVALD. And, as usual, if you are unsure, add FAMILY ID, VAR NAME and the code you have selected to your general list.

There is NO MISSING DATA for this variable.

Item 31. SWSDISP. Social Worker's Disposition. Generally, under "case plan," the social worker will give some indication of the "disposition," after investigation, of the case. That is, indications of what Protective Services plan to do for the alleged abused, if anything, will be mentioned in the investigation report. Unfortunately, these "dispositions" are written in "social worker's language" and vary widely. We have, therefore, prepared Appendix D which encompasses many types of dispositions and tends to be written in the "language" of social workers. And, some of these dispositions overlap, reflecting the ways social worker's state their

planned actions on any given case, and reflecting the complexities of the courses of action open to them. In other words, more than one code may apply and may be essentially similar to another. You must, therefore, familiarize yourself with this list and try to choose the code number that is the most appropriate, that best reflects what will happen to the NIR child and his family.

In this variable we are trying to code two underlying dimensions of the types of dispositions that social worker's do make: a) we are attempting to determine if the case of alleged abuse remains open (independent of the social worker's determination of the validity of the alleged abuse); and b) we are trying to code any change to the NIR child's status that may or may not occur as a result of the social worker's investigation.

Any case is, of course, "open," insofar as "open" means an investigation will (must) take place after an allegation of abuse/neglect. However, some social workers clearly specify a case as "not opened to SES," while others state (in their investigation reports) that the "obviously" open case is being "closed to SES." We wish to retain this distinction made by social workers in order to attempt to assess its meaning and importance. Thus, some categories of Appendix D are not mutually exclusive and you must select the code that best fits the social worker's stated case plan.

Thus, we wish to distinguish open from closed cases. Section I to IV and VIII of Appendix D deal with cases that may be closed for: 1) lack of evidence of abuse/neglect; 2) inability to investigate the allegation; or, 3) inability to make a disposition. We are also interested, here, in the status of the NIR child after the social worker's disposition. Thus, SectionVI deals with "open cases" where the child is returned to the parent(s) or caretaker(s) and SectionVII deals with "open cases" where the NIR child is unlikely to be returned to the caretaker. Section VI reflects two options frequently available to social workers: 1) to retain some supervision of the family under one or another of the State of Florida's social service units (parts of the State of Florida's Social and Economic Services Department (SES); and, 2) to refer the NIR child and/or his(her) family to a private social service group (for example, private counseling, AA, Parents Anonymous, etc.). For some "open cases" the appropriate dispositions reflecting any change, or lack thereof, in the child's status may also be found in Section II through V of Appendix D. And, finally, Section VIII of Appendix D may be needed for cases where the investigation report is unclear and/or the disposition is pending or unclear. SUCH CASES SHOULD BE RECORDED ON YOUR GENERAL LIST.

The variable, SWSDISP, refers to the first allegation and the first investigation report set. And yet, provision is also made for several "special" situations, in terms of dispositions where the initial investigation is insufficient. First, provision is made in Appendix D for both a temporary and a more permanent disposition--that is, codes are provided for cases where immediate aid is necessary and later planned aid also is mentioned in the case plan of the first allegation-investigation set. Second, Section III of Appendix D is for families that cannot be

located immediately and yet provides for this information as well as plans for continuing investigation/disposition. Third, at times, the first investigation may lead to no case plan or disposition. Section VIII provides for such reports.

Item 32. EVENTDSP. The Last or Eventual Disposition of the Case. When there are multiple allegation-investigation sets for a child or family, we wish to repeat the coding performed for item 31, SWSDISP, for the last allegation-investigation set. That is, we wish to know the last case plan for the child/family. The coding should be the same as in item 31, using Appendix D.

In most cases only one allegation-investigation set is present. In such cases, code EVENTDSP the same as SWSDISP. To the extent possible, EVENTDSP should refer to the NIR child.

Finally, if a disposition in an allegation-investigation set between the first and last allegation-investigation set is more severe (that is, results in a more drastic change for the child and/or his family, make a note of FAMILY ID, VAR NAME and the nature of this more serious disposition on your general list.

Item 33. CONGRU. Congruence of Social Worker's Findings and Reports. In this item we are asking you to, as objectively as you can, assess the congruence between what is actually written in the first investigation report of the social worker and the "finding" he/she made for that allegation of abuse. "Finding" is the general term for whether abuse/neglect occured, independent of "validity" and/or "disposition." That is, to the extent you can, given that the social worker may know more about the case than is written on the investigation report, would you, given the information in the first allegation-investigation set, come to the same, or different conclusions concerning disposition/validity of the alleged abuse/neglect?

"Congruence of finding," then,pertains to the extent to which, generally, either or both the validity and disposition appear to follow from the social worker's report. In coding this, the social worker's perspective and the potential constraints on him/her in terms of both what dispositions and determinations of validity are available are to be taken into consideration, to the best of your ability. When in doubt, assume that the social worker did the best he/she could. But, the purpose of the variable is to find those cases where determinations are not being made "well." And, for those who "objectively" appear not to be making appropriate "findings" (a very subjective item), we wish to code the direction in which the findings appear to be inappropriate and some apparent reasons for this.

Therefore, we want you to use the following codes:

1=finding congruent with the information contained in the first allegation-investigation set

2=finding more lenient than the information contained in the first allegation-investigation set

3=finding harsher than the information contained in the first allegation-investigation set

4=congruency of finding inconclusive as the social worker may have no alternative

5=congruency of finding inconclusive as the social worker may not have access to necessary facts that would permit a more

certain/conclusive finding

6=the social worker's first investigation report appears to indicate an investigation that was less thorough than could have been made and thus the finding appears incongruent and/or inconclusive.

7=it is impossible for the coder to assess this, that is, there is really no way to tell from the reports the degree to which the social worker's investigation and the findings are congruent.

As the purpose here is not to criticize social workers, but rather to assess the degree of congruence between investigations and findings, and the directions and reasons (constraints on time, resources of social workers, inability of social workers to make appropriate findings due to situations beyond their control, and, incomplete investigations--perhaps due to heavy caseloads and/or just insufficient investigation effort) for any lack of congruence we seem to find between the first investigation report and the social worker's findings and dispositions, then it is best to code this conservatively. That is, code in the direction of congruence when in doubt.

BUT, IF YOU ARE IN DOUBT AS TO WHICH CODE TO USE, ADD THIS ITEM TO YOUR GENERAL LIST AND RECORD THE USUAL INFORMATION.

THERE ARE NO MISSING DATA CODES FOR THIS ITEM.

Items 34 and 35. RECIDAB1 and RECIDAB2. Recidivism of Abuse/Neglect. For families with more than one initial or allegation report, we would like to code how many more times abuse/neglect is alleged for that family. To do this we have created two variables. The first requires counting the number of subsequent allegation reports in which the alleged abuse is equal to or greater in degree of "seriousness" to the alleged abuse in the first allegation report, as coded in the variable TYPEAB1--the most serious allegation of abuse. The second variable asks for a count of the subsequent allegation reports in which the alleged abuse is "less serious" than the abuse alleged in the first allegation report, using again the type of abuse coded in TYPEAB1.

The two recidivism variables are each only one digit. The appropriate codes will be the following:

0=no further allegations of abuse or neglect

1-7=the absolute number, up to 7, of allegations (subsequent) that are as serious as the first (RECIDAB1) or less serious than the first (RECIDAB2)

8=eight or more subsequent allegations are as serious as the first (RECIDAB1) or less serious (RECIDAB2)

9=the first allegation report is missing

Use caution in counting and determining whether the alleged abuse/neglect is a) more serious or equal to that in the initial allegation report; or, b) less serious than that in the initial allegation report.

The Missing Data Codes do not apply here.

Item 36. WATS. WATS Line Calls. Determination of whether or not an allegation of child abuse or neglect was received on the central

WATS lines is somewhat difficult. It can be determined in three ways:

a) an asterisk or star in the upper left hand corner of the allegation report is a WATS line call. Code it "1."
b) initials (of the worker receiving the call) in the upper left hand corner of the allegation report is a WATS line call. Code it "1."
c) If, on the allegation report, it says "called in to (a name, initials)," then it is a WATS line call. This third method of distinguishing WATS line calls may be located anywhere on the allegation report but tends to be near the lower left hand portion. Code such cases "1."

If none of the above (a-c) apply, then you must assume the allegation report was not received on the WATS line, and code this variable "2," meaning "no/unclear."

Items 37 and 38. QUALAL AND QUALIV. Quality of Reports. Here, you the coder, are judging the length and specificity (detail) of the report(s).

Guidelines to follow, assuming single space typing (use your judgement to adapt this to handwritten reports):

a) a report is short if it is less than 3 or 4 lines in length.
b) a report is moderate if it fills a minimum of 1 inch on the page and if it does not exceed the space allowed, that is, if it does not enter the space provided for the "case plan."
c) a report is long if it exceeds the space provided.

In determining specificity, consider how accurately and in what degree of detail the problem is presented in the allegation report. For specificity of the investigation report, you may also consider to what extent the social worker addresses the issues mentioned in the allegation report. Specificity should be determined by the degree to which objective and explicit behaviors (one behavior if only one form of abuse or neglect is at issue) are noted in the social worker's report. Code this item as general when no specific behaviors are mentioned, only general family situations. For example, "disorganized family life" would be a general allegation and "children appear happy" would be a general statement from an investigation report.

WHEN IN DOUBT ON THE CODING OF ANY ITEM, list the FAMILY ID, VAR NAME, item number and the codes you chose and the explanation of those codes on lined paper. Clearly mark this general list with your name and the date you did the initial coding.

IV. CODING INSTRUCTIONS

ITEM	VARIABLE NAME	VARIABLE LABEL	DESCRIPTION AND CODES	SET	MISSING DATA	COLUMN	FORM
1.	FAMILY	FAMILY ID	A unique 4 digit number.	FULL	NONE	1-4	f4.0
2.	CARDNO	CARD NUMBER	For this initial coding it will be "1" in all cases (families).	FIRST	NONE	5	f1.0
3 *	NOREPSAL	NUMBER OF ALLEGATION REPORTS PER FAMILY	Code the actual number of initial or allegation reports; if ten or more, code as "9."	FULL	NONE	6	f1.0
4 *	NOREPSIV	NUMBER OF INVESTIG REPORTS PER FAMILY	Code the actual number of investigation or follow-up reports, if ten or more, code as "9."	FULL	NONE	7	f1.0
5. *	DATELREP	DATE OF LAST REPORT OF ANY KIND	A six digit code: YEAR/MONTH/DAY	FULL	777777 888888 999999	8-13	f6.0
6. *	DATEAREP	DATE OF FIRST ALLEGATION REPORT	A six digit code: YEAR/MONTH/DAY	FULL	"	14-19	f6.0
7. *	DATEIREP	DATE OF FIRST INVESTIGATION REPORT	A six digit code: YEAR/MONTH/DAY	FULL	"	20-25	f6.0

ITEM	VARIABLE NAME	VARIABLE LABEL	DESCRIPTION AND CODES	SET	MISSING DATA	COLUMN	FORMA
8.*	RESPONSE	TIME TAKEN TO RESPOND TO ALLEGATION	Codes: 0=investigation began same day as allegation 1=investigation began one day after allegation 2=investigation began less than one week after allegation 3=investigation began one to two weeks after allegation 4=investigation began within one month of allegation 5=investigation began more than one month after allegation 6=allegation date missing/ unreadable 7=investigation date missing/ unreadable 8=allegation and investigation date missing/unreadable 9=allegation or investigation report missing	FIRST	6,7,8,9	26	f1.0
9.*	PRIORSUB	INDICATION OF PRIOR SUBSEQUENT CONTACT	Codes: 1=yes, prior allegation likely 2=yes, subsequent investigation report likely 3=yes, prior allegation and subsequent investigation report likely 4=no, but history of abuse is explicitly mentioned 5=no, but prior knowledge of or contact with family 6=no	FULL	NONE	27	f1.0

ITEM	VARIABLE NAME	VARIABLE LABEL	DESCRIPTION AND CODES	SET	MISSING DATA	COLUMN	FORM
10.*	COUNTY	COUNTY	Consult Appendix A for county codes.	FIRST	77 88 99	28-29	f2.(
11.*	NOKIDS	NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN FAMILY	A two digit number representing the largest number of children in the family. (See Section V for cases where this is unclear.	FIRST	77 88 99	30-31	f2.(
12.*	BIRTH	BIRTHDATE OF CHILD NAMED ON THE INITIAL REPORT	A six digit code: YEAR/MONTH/DAY	FIRST	777777 888888 999999	32-37	f6.(
13.*	BYROLD	BIRTH YEAR OF OLDEST CHILD	Two digits representing the birth year of oldest child in the family.	FIRST	-1 88 99	38-39	f2.(
14.*	BYRYNG	BIRTH YEAR OF YOUNGEST CHILD	Two digits representing the birth year of the youngest child in the family.	FIRST	-1 88 99	40-41	f2.(
15.	RACE	RACE OF CHILD NAMED ON INITIAL REPORT	Codes: 1=white 2=black 3=American Indian 4=oriental 5=spanish/latin Am/PR 6=other	FIRST	7 8 9	42	f1.0
16.	SEX	SEX OF CHILD NAMED ON INITIAL REPORT	Codes: 1=male 2=female	FIRST	7 8 9	43	f1.0

ITEM	VARIABLE NAME	VARIABLE LABEL	DESCRIPTION AND CODES	SET	MISSING DATA	COLUMN	FORM
17.*	MFCNAME	MO FA CH LAST NAME	Codes: 1=all are the same 2=mo fa are the same, ch differs 3=mo ch are the same, fa differs 4=fa ch are the same, mo differs 5=none are the same 6=mo fa are the same, ch unknown 7=mo ch are the same, fa unknown 8=fa ch are the same, mo unknown 9=all are unknown, or ch known, ma fa unknown 0=one or both parents deceased	FIRST	NONE	44	f1.0
18.*	MFCADD	MO FA CH ADDRESS	Codes: same as item 17 except code 0 does not exist.	FIRST	NONE	45	f1.0
19.*	CLIVE1	NIR CHILD LIVES WITH FIRST	Codes: see Appendix B, relationship codes.	FIRST	97,98,99	46-47	f2.0
20.*	CLIVE2	NIR CHILD LIVES WITH ALSO	Codes: see Appendix B, relationship codes.	FIRST	97,98,99	48-49	f2.0
21.*	ABUSERAL	ALLEGED ABUSER ON ALLEGATION REPORT	Codes: See Appendix B, relationship codes.	FIRST	97,98,99	50-51	f2.0
22.*	ABUSERIV	SUSPECTED ABUSER AFTER INVESTIGATION	Codes see Appendix B, relationship codes.	FIRST	97,98,99	52-53	f2.0
23.*	REPORTER	REPORTER INDICATED ON FIRST INITIAL REPORT	Codes: See Appendix B, relationship codes	FIRST	97,98,99	54-55	f2.0

ITEM	VARIABLE NAME	VARIABLE LABEL	DESCRIPTION AND CODES	SET	MISSING DATA	COLUMN	FO
24.*	TYPEAB1	MOST SERIOUS TYPE OF ABUSE FIRST ALLEGATION	Codes: see Appendix C, abuse codes.	FIRST	97-99	56-57	f2
25.*	TYPEAB2	SECOND SERIOUS ABUSE TYPE FIRST ALLEGATION	Codes: see Appendix C, abuse codes.	FIRST	00	58-59	f2
26.*	ABUSESW1	SWS FINDING MOST SERIOUS ABUSE	Codes: see Appendix C, abuse codes.	FIRST	96-99	60-61	f2
27.*	ABUSESW2	SWS FINDING SECOND MOST SERIOUS ABUSE	Codes: see Appendix C, abuse codes.	FIRST	00	62-63	f2

ITEM	VARIABLE NAME	VARIABLE LABEL	DESCRIPTION AND CODES	SET	MISSING DATA	COLUMN	F
28.*	VALIDSW	SWS FINDING OF VALIDITY	Codes: 1=TYPEAB1 and TYPEAB2 were both valid 2=TYPEAB1 was valid 3=TYPEAB2 was valid 4=a less serious abuse or neglect was valid 5=a more serious abuse or neglect was valid 6=unclear, abuse or neglect was probable 7=unclear, abuse or neglect was not probable 8=all allegations made in the first report were invalid 9=no information to code this 0=unreadable report or no investigation report at all	FIRST	9,0	64	

201

200

ITEM	VARIABLE NAME	VARIABLE LABEL	DESCRIPTION AND CODES	SET	MISSING DATA	COLUMN	FORM
29.*	PHYAB	EVID OF ABUSE GIL DEF	Codes: 1=definite physical abuse 2=physical abuse very likely 3=physical abuse quite likely 4=risk of physical abuse high 5=physical abuse quite unlikely 6=absolutely no evidence of physical abuse	FIRST	7 8 9	65	f1.(
30.*	EVERVALD	WAS ABUSE OR NEGLECT EVER VALID FOR FAMILY	Codes: 1=only one allegation report 2=all allegations valid 3=first valid, at least one more valid, but not all 4=first valid, rest invalid 5=first invalid, at least one valid 6=none valid 7=first valid, can't code 2,3,4 8=first invalid, can't code 5,6 9=first unsure, at least one valid 0=first unsure, rest unsure also or, first unsure, rest invalid	FULL	NONE	66	f1.(

ITEM	VARIABLE NAME	VARIABLE LABEL	DESCRIPTION AND CODES	SET	MISSING DATA	COLUMN	FOR
31.*	SWSDISP	SOCIAL WORKERS DISPOSITION	Codes: see Appendix D, disposition codes.	FIRST	777 888 999	67-69	f3
32.*	EVENTDSP	EVENTUAL DISPOSITION OF ALL REPORTS	Codes: see Appendix D, disposition codes.	FULL	777 888 999	70-72	f3
33.*	CONGRU	CONGRUENCE OF SWS FINDING AND REPORT	Codes: 1=finding congruent 2=finding more lenient 3=finding harsher 4=no alternative for social worker 5=social worker may lack important facts 6=investigation appears/may be less than thorough 7=impossible for coder to assess congruence	FIRST	NONE	73	f1

ITEM	VARIABLE NAME	VARIABLE LABEL	DESCRIPTION AND CODES	SET	MISSING DATA	COLUMN	FORMA
34.*	RECIDAB1	RECIDIVISM OF SAME OR MORE SERIOUS ABUSE	Code the number of reports where alleged abuse is the same or more serious than in the first allegation report. Codes: 0=no reports allege abuse of the same or greater seriousness than that alleged in the first allegation report 1 thru 7=the absolute number of reports alleging abuse of the same or greater seriousness 8=eight or more reports allege abuse of the same or greater seriousness than that alleged in the first allegation report 9=first allegation report missing	FULL	NONE	74	f1.0
35.*	RECIDAB2	RECIDIVISM OR LESS SERIOUS ABUSE	Code the number of reports where alleged abuse is less serious than in the first allegation report. Codes: 0=no reports allege abuse of less seriousness than that alleged in the first allegation report 1 thru 8=the absolute number of reports alleging abuse of less seriousness 9=nine or more reports allege abuse of less seriousness than that alleged in the first allegation report	FULL	NONE	75	f1.0

ITEM	VARIABLE NAME	VARIABLE LABEL	DESCRIPTION AND CODES	SET	MISSING DATA	COLUMN	FORMA
36.*	WATS	WAS WATS LINE USED TO REPORT CASE	Codes: 1=yes 2=no,or unclear	FIRST	NONE	76	f1.0
37.*	QUALAL	QUALITY OF FIRST ALLEGATION REPORT	Codes: 1=short, general 2=short,specific 3=moderate, general 4=moderate, specific 5=long, general 6=long, specific	FIRST	7,8,9	77	f1.0
38.*	QUALIV	QUALITY OF FIRST INVESTIG REPORT	Codes: same as item 37.	FIRST	7,8,9	78	f1.0
39.	CODER	CODER	Codes: 1=Paula 2=Sue 3=Joyce 4=Lorie 5=Eileen 6=Andrea	FULL	NONE	79	f1.0
40.	XEROX	QUALITY OF XEROX	Codes: 1=readable 2=mostly readable 3=poor 4=unreadable	FIRST PRI-MAR-ILY	NONE	80	f1.0

Appendix A

State of Florida
County List

1. Alachua
2. Baker
3. Bay
4. Bradford
5. Brevard
6. Broward
7. Calhoun
8. Charlotte
9. Citrus
10. Clay
11. Collier
12. Columbia
13. Dade
14. De Soto
15. Dixie
16. Duval
17. Escambia
18. Flagler
19. Franklin
20. Gadsden
21. Gilchrist
22. Glades
23. Gulf
24. Hamilton
25. Hardee
26. Hendry
27. Hernando
28. Highlands
29. Hillsborough
30. Holmes
31. Indian River
32. Jackson
33. Jefferson
34. Lafayette
35. Lake
36. Lee
37. Leon
38. Levy
39. Liberty
40. Madison
41. Manatee
42. Marion
43. Martin
44. Monroe
45. Nassau
46. Okaloosa
47. Okeechobee
48. Orange
49. Osceola
50. Palm Beach
51. Pasco
52. Pinellas
53. Polk
54. Putnam
55. St. Johns
56. St. Lucie
57. Santa Rosa
58. Sarasota
59. Seminole
60. Sumter
61. Suwannee
62. Taylor
63. Union
64. Volusia
65. Wakulla
66. Walton
67. Washington

Relationship Codes

01=natural mother and natural father
02=natural mother
03=natural father

04=step-mother and natural father
05=step-mother and step-father
06=step-mother
07=step-father and natural mother
08=step-father

09=foster mother and foster father
10=foster mother
11=foster father

12=brother and sister-in-law
13=sister and brother-in-law
14=brother(s)
15=sister(s)
16=brother(s) and sister(s)
17=sibling(s), sex unclear

18=maternal grandparents
19=maternal grandmother
20=maternal grandfather
21=paternal grandparents
22=paternal grandmother
23=paternal grandfather
24=grandparents, side of family unclear
25=grandmother, side of family unclear
26=grandfather, side of family unclear

27=maternal aunt
28=paternal aunt
29=aunt, side of family unclear
30=maternal uncle
31=paternal uncle
32=uncle, side of family unclear

33=maternal relative
34=paternal relative
35=relative, side of family unclear

36=commune
37=several unrelated adults, non-commune
38=extended family, possibly unrelated

39=mother's boyfriend
40=father's girlfriend
41=mother's husband (not father or step-father)

42=friend
43=adult male friend/neighbor
44=adult female friend/neighbor
45=neighbor
46=babysitter
47=adult friend(s) of child (NIR)
48=peer of child

49=institution

50=doctor
51=nurse
52=hospital

53=psychiatrist
54=psychologist
55=other mental health counselor or worker/clinic
56=clinic, unspecified

57=police
58=attorney
59=court
60=Division of Youth Services worker
61=F.B.I.

62=school teacher
63=school principal
64=school nurse
65=school guidance counselor
66=school counselor (non-guidance; assume guidance if not specified)
67=day care center worker/teacher
68=school, in general

69=clergy

70=public social worker
71=private social worker
72=other social worker; e.g. VISTA worker etc.

73=co-worker
74=stranger
75=concerned citizen; e.g. church member, passer-by, landlord
76=anonymous

77=child named-self report

78=suspected custody conflict
79=parent without custody suspected of causing trouble for parent with custody

80=family could not be located
81=family moved
82=abuser fled

83=other/relation unknown

84=no abuser
97=unreadable
98=specifically stated unknown
99=NA

APPENDIX C. ABUSE TYPES

Codes for Items 24 - 27

PHYSICAL ABUSE OR RISK THEREOF

01 = dead on arrival
02 = death due to injury
03 = extreme and brutal attack on child requiring treatment / drug addiction at birth
04 = brain damage due to beating or attack
05 = skull fracture
06 = broken bones, other fractures
07 = burns
08 = severe bruises
09 = severe cuts
10 = sores, less severe cuts, bruises
11 = slaps, blows, kicks
12 = physical beating, general, no treatment required
13 = physical beating, no evidence of injury
14 = physician suspects physical abuse
15 = risk of physical attack

MEDICAL NEGLECT, POTENTIAL PHYSICAL RISK

16 = malnutrition
17 = other serious medical neglect
18 = improperly fed
19 = improperly sheltered*
20 = improperly clothed
21 = slow or improper development
22 = medical neglect due to parental inaction*
23 = medical neglect due to parental ignorance
24 = medical neglect due to religious reasons
25 = inadequate medical care, other
26 = parents unable to handle hyperactive/handicapped child
27 = parents unable to handle emotionally disturbed child
28 = parents unable to handle retarded child
29 = unspecified neglect (physical)

OTHER NEGLECT OF CHILD

30 = abandoned
31 = left unattended
32 = child found wandering inappropriately
33 = parent did not pick up child at the right time
34 = child forced to care for other children
35 = parents generally unable (not medically) to care for children
36 = "valid situational abuse"*
37 = parental expectations for child excessively high
38 = lack of proper supervision
39 = leaving children with babysitters indiscriminately

NEGLECT DUE TO CARETAKER'S LIFESTYLE

40 = parental fighting -- physical
41 = parental drunkenness, heavy alcohol use
42 = parental fighting -- severe*
43 = parental drug use
44 = parental sexual misconduct, not toward child
45 = parental mental illness
46 = parental retardation
47 = parental ignorance
48 = parental life style interferes with ability to properly care for child
49 = parental life style as bad influence for child
50 = parental life style, general*

NEGLECT EXPRESSED IN CHILD'S ACTIONS

51 = running away
52 = truancy (school)
53 = refusal to obey parents
54 = refusal to return home
55 = parents and children cannot get along - fighting and arguing / child kicked out of the home

56 = mischevious behavior of child
57 = serious misconduct of child (e.g. delinquency, drug use)
58 = sexual misconduct by child
59 = staying out late
60 = school problems (child)
61 = other general behavior problems

SEXUAL ABUSE

62 = incest*
63 = other intimate sexual contact with adults*
64 = molestation, fondling by non-related adults
65 = molestation, fondling by related adults
66 = other sexual abuse*

NEGLECT AS CUSTODY CONFLICTS

67 = suspected custody conflict
68 = caretaker not having custody takes child away
69 = parents and/or relatives alleging abuse to cause each other trouble; not an attempt to gain custody
70 = desire for custody in the child's best interests
71 = desire for custody in the parent's best interests
72 = relatives fighting over who can best care for the child
73 = other custody conflict*

OTHER ABUSE/NEGLECT, LESS SPECIFIC

74 = unspecified physical abuse; suspected
75 = unspecified general neglect
76 = less serious general neglect
77 = uninteded abuse/neglect
78 = accidental abuse/neglect
79 = past abuse/neglect, but situation has been remedied

RESIDUAL CATEGORIES

80 = family moved
81 = unable to locate family*
82 = no abuse/neglect evident
83 = no suspected abuser*
84 = social worker could not make a determination of abuse/neglect
85 = other*

MISSING DATA CODES

96 = investigation does not address alleged abuse
97 = unreadable
98 = unknown
99 = no information
00 = only one abuse type (to be used for TYPEAB2 and ABUSESW2 only)

NOTE: Parent is, in this appendix, used to refer to the actual parent or to the caretaker responsible for the NIR child at the time of the first allegation and, subsequently, at the time of the first investigation.

APPENDIX D. DISPOSITION OF INVESTIGATION REPORTS

	Short term Emergency Shelter		Non-emergency		Non-emergency
I. Invalid	OPEN	CLOSED	OPEN	CLOSED	NOT OPENED
Reason unclear		001		002	003
Allegations false		004		005	006
Internal family problems; let them solve it		007		008	009
Unless other reports received		010		011	012
Protective Services not needed		013		014	015
Other agency already handling		016		017	018
II. Sufficiently Invalid					
Sufficiently invalid		019		020	021
Sufficiently invalid but family warned		022		023	024
Situation exaggerated		025		026	027
No further services needed		028		029	030
Necessary services immediately provided		031		032	033
Counseling during investigation; resolved problem		034		035	036
Social worker did what was requested		037		038	039
III. Family Not Found At First					
Not found (miscellaneous file)	040	041	042	043	044
Found, new area later notified	045	046	047	048	049
Found, general services provided	050	051	052	053	054
Found, health services given	055	056	057	058	
Found, home services given	059	060	061	062	
Found, supervision	063	064	065	066	
Found, no supervison		067		068	069

	Short term Emergency Shelter		Non-emergency		Non-emergency
	OPEN	CLOSED	OPEN	CLOSED	NOT OPENED
Family found; child:					
Removed from caretaker, to relative	070	071	072	073	074
Removed from caretaker, to non-relative	075	076	077	078	079
Removed, to depencent of Protective Services	080	081	082	083	084
Removed, to foster care	085	086	087	088	089
Removed, to institution	090	091	092	093	094
Removed, to OYS	095	096	097	098	099
Removed, to court	100	101	102	103	104
Removed, placement unclear	105	106	107	108	109
IV. ABNORMAL TERMINATION					
Services terminated by client		110		111	112
Petition withdrawn by client	113	114	115	116	117
Child died		118		119	120
Client refused cooperation		121		122	123
V. LIMITED SERVICES					
Necessary services given	124	125	126	127	128
Check family once then close	129	130	131	132	133
Counseling, check once then close	134	135	136	137	138
P.S. gave some services, very limited	139	140	141	142	
P.S. gave some services, refer to other agency	143	144	145	146	
Refer to other agency	147	148	149	150	
Return to agency already involved	151	152	153	154	
Refer to other agency, reason unclear	155	156	157	158	

	Short term Emergency Shelter		Non-emergency		Non-emergency
	OPEN	CLOSED	OPEN	CLOSED	NOT OPENED
VI. SERVICES, NIR CHILD REMAINS WITH CARETAKER					
a) supervision/observation only:					
short term	159		160		
long term	161		162		
unspecified time	163		164		
until situation stabilizes	165		166		
b) services only:					
medical/health	167	168	169	170	
counseling	171	172	173	174	
homemaking/welfare/daycare	175	176	177	178	
c) supervision and services:					
super. and health	179	180	181	182	
super. and counsel	183	184	185	186	
super. and home	187	188	189	190	
VII. CHANGE IN NIR CHILD'S STATUS OR RESIDENCE					
a) with supervision:					
to relative	191		192		
to non-relative	193		194		
to temporary placement (shelter, home, etc.) non-emergency	195	195*	196	196*	
to foster care	197		198		

*use also if child was eventually returned without supervision to his original caretaker (note its use)

	Short term Emergency Shelter		Non-emergency		Non-emergency
	OPEN	CLOSED	OPEN	CLOSED	NOT OPENED
b) without supervision:					
to relative	199	200	201	202	
to non-relative (not original CLIVE1 or 2)	203	204	205	206	-
to institution	207	208	209	210	
to institution, later placement planned	211		212		
to foster care	213	214	215	216	
c) other change:					
to DYS	217	218	219	220	
adjudicated dependent, to caretaker with super.	221*		221*		*note which use was intended
adjudicated dependent, placement unclear	222	223	224	225	
to court, final disposition pending	226	227	228	229	
to Family Services/Protective Services, final disposition pending	230		231		
VIII. NO FINDING					
Pending, no other information	232		233		
Social worker unable to make a disposition	234	235	236	237	
Pending, trying to find placement	238		239		
Other (use if disposition is unreadable but it can be determined if case is open or closed)	240	241	242	243	244

Appendix E

Missing Data Codes[a]

	One Column Variables	Two Column Variables	Six Column Variables
NO INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT ALL	9	99	999999
THE REPORT EXPLICITLY STATES NO INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE	8	88	888888
INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE, BUT IS UNDECIPHERABLE, OR UNREADABLE	7	77	777777

[a]This is the general format to be used with all variables which have missing data. It applies directly to items 5 - 7, 10 - 12, 15, 16, 29, 31, 32, 37, and 38. Variations on these codes apply to items 8, 13, 14, and 19 - 28. Detailed instructions for these variables are contained in Section V. Variables which have no missing data codes are items 1 - 4, 9, 17, 18, 30, 33 - 36, 39, and 40.

Table 1. Use of Appendix B

Categories of Relationships and codes	VARIABLES*				
	CLIVE1	CLIVE2	ABUSERAL	ABUSERIV	REPORTER
relatives, pseudo-relatives (01-41)	1	1	1	1	1
friends, neighbors, babysitters (42-48)	2	2	1	1	1
institutions (49)	2	2	2	2	2
the five professional groups (50-72)	3	3	2	2	1
strangers, anonymous, concerned citizens (73-76)	3	3	2	2	1
NIR child (77)	2	3	3	3	1
custody conflict (78,79)	3	3	3	1	3
family moved/not able to locate (80-82)	3	3	3	1	3
no abuser (84)	3	3	3	1	3
Other, relation unknown (83)	3	3	3	3	3

*The numbers in this table represent the likelihood of the codes in Appendix B being used for any of the five variables that use the codes in Appendix B (items 19 to 23). The numbers below the categories of relationships are the appropriate code numbers found in Appendix B. And the numbers, from 1 to 3, in the table above have the following meaning:

1=quite a likely code number for this variable
2=a possible code for this variable
3=a code not to be used with this variable.